

# **THE LOST GENERATION**

**MAXINE DAVIS**

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# THE LOST GENERATION



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# THE LOST GENERATION

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*A Portrait of American Youth Today*

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By MAXINE DAVIS

*New York*

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1936

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*Set up and printed. Published March, 1936.*

SET UP BY BROWN BROTHERS LINOTYPERS  
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BY THE FERRIS PRINTING COMPANY

TO MY MOTHER  
ROSE H. DAVIS

*With the prayer that some small portion  
of the courage, the uncluttered vision,  
the spiritual force with which she has al-  
ways buttressed my life has gone into this  
book. And that it may be worthy of her.*



Now hollow fires burn out to black,  
And lights are guttering low;  
Square your shoulders, lift your pack,  
And leave your friends and go.

Oh never fear, man, nought's to dread,  
Look not left nor right;  
In all the endless road you tread,  
There's nothing but the night.

—A. E. HOUSMAN,  
"Shropshire Lad."

Due acknowledgment is made to *McCall's Magazine* and to the *Washington Post* for permission to reprint such material as has appeared in their pages.



## PREFACE

THIS BOOK is the portrayal of a condition which demands both an immediate remedy and a long-range program, for it deals with that most perishable of all commodities: youth.

In the pages that follow I have endeavored to show the characteristics, the opportunities, the handicaps, the needs, and our chance to help the boys and girls in this country who face the most difficult situation which has ever confronted youth in the history of this nation. I make this statement without forgetting the courage and the hardships of our pioneer forefathers. For it is always easier to do, however arduous and even terrifying the action, than to sit and wait as the young men and women in the depression years have been obliged to mark time.

This volume makes no pretense of scientifically based authority. It is the work of a journalist: the result of observation, analysis, eclecticism, personal opinion, and personal conclusion. For it, I gathered the material as any reporter covers a story: I went out over the country and collected it, adding to my findings the studies and research of some years of journalistic writing in this field.

In a cheap second-hand car I travelled almost four months, alone, over 10,038 miles of the United States, talking with boys and girls every time I could. My encounters were many and pleasant and fortunate. I found them easily, everywhere, as one inevitably must. I sought them out in their schools and in their homes and at their work and play. I stopped to

visit with them whenever accident indicated. They were more than generous, and I acknowledge to one and all of them a profound debt of gratitude.

I called upon the men and women in official and unofficial positions who are daily meeting the boys and girls of this generation, and who know their chances and their situation. They gave me their time and cooperation without stint.

I am indebted beyond hope of payment to Otis Wiese, editor of *McCall's Magazine* and to Mabel Search, its associate editor, for the privilege of going out, on assignment for *McCall's*, to make this survey and to write a series of two articles on this subject; and for their vision and their encouragement.

I am grateful to Elizabeth Shirley Enochs of the Children's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor for her help and cooperation. And to Catherine Graves, without whom this book could not have been written.

MAXINE DAVIS.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	ix

### PART ONE

#### TRUSTEES OF POSTERITY

##### CHAPTER

I. FOCUS ON YOUTH	3
II. BY THE WAYSIDE	9

### PART TWO

#### MOPE—HOPE—GROPE

I. THEIRS NOT TO REASON WHY	25
II. WHY GET SORE?	33
III. STALKING THE RED MENACE	38
IV. IT'S NOT THEIR BABY	48
V. SOMETHING IS BOUND TO TURN UP	57
VI. YOUTH WITHOUT FAITH	68
VII. FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE	79
VIII. WANTED—A HERO	95
IX. HEART'S DESIRE	102
X. WHAT THIS GENERATION WANTS	108
XI. OPEN SESAME	114
XII. JOB HUNTERS	125
XIII. TIME ON THEIR HANDS	133
XIV. ESCAPE	146
XV. OLD FOLKS AT HOME	156

### PART THREE

#### TO EARN THEIR BREAD

I. IN THE FACTORY	167
II. IN STORE AND OFFICE	188

CHAPTER	PAGE
III. IN THE FIELDS	202
IV. WITH WILLING HANDS	211
V. IN THE PROFESSIONS	220

#### PART FOUR SERVICE STATIONS

I. UNCLE SAM DIGS DOWN	235
CCC Camps	235
The Transient Service	244
The Youth Administration	251
Future Farmers of America	257
II. THE LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE	260
III. FIGHTING LEISURE HAZARDS	279
IV. THE STATE: THE WISE FATHER	291
Public Recreational Facilities	291
The Juvenile Court	295
The Training School	308
V. PERSONAL SERVICE	314

#### PART FIVE FOR EMERGENCY ONLY

I. FLAWS IN OUR FORMULAE	321
--------------------------	-----

#### PART SIX PLANNED ABUNDANCE

I. HOME REPAIRS	337
-----------------	-----

#### PART SEVEN THE LOST GENERATION

I. CROSSROADS	365
INDEX	373

PART ONE

TRUSTEES OF POSTERITY



## *Chapter One*

### FOCUS ON YOUTH

THE YOUTH of the nation are the trustees of posterity. This is as true today as when Disraeli observed it.

We in the United States depend upon the twenty-one million boys and girls between sixteen and twenty-four years old to control this country. They will elect presidents and precinct committeemen. They are going to boss the telephone and electric companies, string their lines, mine their copper, rear their dams. They are going to drive steam locomotives and milk wagons. They are going to head banks and teach schools. They are going to stand at the assembly lines in automobile factories, and build houses and make shoes. They are going to herd cattle and grow corn and report the news. Theirs is the responsibility for carrying on.

Youth today brings to its solemn charge the same high hopes, the same zest for work, the same will to achieve, the joyous love of life and romance which has characterized it since the beginning of time.

Our boys and girls have grown up in the belief that America is the Land of Promise. They cannot remember when they first learned that the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness was theirs inalienably as the right to breathe and see and smell. As naturally as their voices broke and deepened, our young men grew up in the assurance that edu-

cation and hard work were the Open Sesame to respectable jobs secured by reliability and perseverance, to homes of their own, and to honored places in the eyes of their fellow-men.

In the past few years many of them have found this is not true. The older generation has betrayed and deceived them.

About three millions of our young people who are out of school today have no work, through no fault of their own.

Many others are engaged on slim part-time jobs so trifling in the time they fill and the money they produce as to have little or no meaning to the young workmen.

Bleakly our youth has been marking time while the clock ticks away its bright years, the good years of plowing and sowing and sweating. They are runners, delayed at the gun. They have lost so much time at the start that only the exceptional can challenge the finish.

The depression years have left us with a generation robbed of time and opportunity just as the Great War left the world its heritage of a lost generation.

The lost generation of the 1930's has its own handicaps, as crippling as shrapnel and mustard gas. It has never known a normal world. Consider this:

Our young people are products of a psychopathic period. Boys and girls who came of voting age in 1935 were born in 1914. Their earliest memories are of mob murder and war hysteria. Their next, the cynical reaction to war's sentimentality and war's futility. Their adolescence was divided between the crass materialism of the jazz 1920's and the shock of the economic collapse. In effect, they went to high school in limousines and washed dishes in college.

More:—They have seen us abolish heaven and outlaw hell. They have watched us set up money as a god, and then watched that god topple. They have seen us distribute fame



as generously to Al Capone and Huey Long and Mae West as to Woodrow Wilson and Einstein and Jane Addams.

They have seen poverty and starvation overtake men and women who have rolled steel and stood behind counters and kept books faithfully all their lives. And they have read of a lame-brained heiress literally tossing away millions.

They have seen people who wanted to work—and could not—and people who did not want to work—and would not—living on the same level of government bounty.

They have seen instances too numerous to recite which they may conceivably interpret as a denial of all the traditions and principles in which Americans have been born and reared.

What has all of this done to them? What does it portend to us, to the United States of America?

We know all too well what it has meant in other lands. The youth of many European nations was idle, hopeless amidst the debris left in the trail of the economic holocaust that swept their fatherlands. It has been marshalled by autocrats into the forces which set up new forms of government, presented, and accepted, as ideal to their young men and women, but diametrically opposed to our own concept of the good state.

We can understand this. When the old systems failed it utterly, youth, ever impatient, was willing to try something new. Revision and reconstruction do not appeal to the poor, the hungry, the inexperienced.

What of our own young people? They too have been living through the same dark days that caused their foreign brothers to see Mussolini and Hitler and Lenin appear as leaders bathed in light. Can we depend upon them now to live and work and carry on in our own beliefs of democracy, individual liberty, and freedom? Or will they, cynical, dis-

satisfied, revolt against the established order and lead us into strange and dangerous ways? Do the European formulae seem better than our own familiar muddling? Is there a large enough element of idle, unhappy, defeated youth in this country to force revolutionary action?

Many of us have been asking ourselves these questions. We cannot answer them by speculating, by theorizing. The practical method for finding the facts is to go out and meet our boys and girls themselves, talk with them, find out what they are doing, what they think, what they want. Hear all this from their own lips. See it in the evidence of their own acts. Search out their opportunities for work and play. Discover whether we, the older generations, are aware of their plight and are doing anything of real substance to help them. Only thus may we estimate whether or not this generation, like that war generation, is lost to us; whether, without bearings, it has wandered far, far onto precarious ground.

Let us, therefore, journey forth and garner at first hand the facts in a situation which may well be momentous.

We will not ride in drawing rooms on fast trains and stop at the best hotels. We will not wing our way in any luxurious new air liners. We will go, as I did, in a flivver, weather-worn and battle-scarred. We will make no definite schedule of time or route. We will not hurry; we will take months. We will drive across this country along fine four-lane highways and muddy bumpy byways. We will travel from the piney shores of Maine to the paintless textile towns of the Carolinas. From Pittsburgh's shanty settlements to Chicago's Gold Coast. Through Iowa's tall corn rows to the many-towered oil towns of Oklahoma and Texas. From clean-scrubbed New England villages to the lettuce patches of the Imperial Valley. From the shadow of the dome of the Capi-

tol at Washington to the Golden Gate. We will not miss a single section of this country.

We will visit men and women who are in daily contact with our young people, to see what they are doing for and with them. We will call on university presidents and high-school teachers. We will meet relief administrators and social workers; employers, heads of employment agencies and labor leaders. We will talk with politicians and economists, with newspaper editors and policemen and parents.

That will be easy. They will be very glad to see us and to contribute their experience and their observation.

We will visit some of the factories and stores, the schools and the social agencies that touch our youth. We will see for ourselves what opportunities we are giving them.

We will talk with the boys and girls wherever and whenever we find them. We will trust to luck for that. It will not be difficult. We will discover them in filling stations. We do not know the filling-station census, but here are thousands of them, and they are usually operated by young men. They seem the refuge of an astounding number of boys. We will meet our young people in poolrooms and country clubs. We will stop to talk with boys in CCC camps hewing trails for forest rangers. To boys plowing on Nebraska farms, and to boys waiting in line since five in the morning at the door of a Chicago Packingtown employment office. To girls waiting for the probation officer at the juvenile court; and to girls wrapping pie-pans in a five-and-dime store in Kansas City, their college sorority pins hanging on heat-limp blouses. To Detroit debutantes and to boys enrolling in a Los Angeles trade school. . . .

Sometimes we will tell them what we are searching, and sometimes we will just find an excuse to chatter. Boys and

girls we know are friendly. They naturally enjoy a chance to talk.

We will make no sociological survey; we are not social scientists. We will not come back with any documented records. We want to explore the lives of the boys and girls we meet, and there is no tabulating and card-indexing of the hearts and souls of human beings. We cannot weight statistics of hope deferred, or figure ratios in blighted ambitions. We wish to learn. Learn whether this generation is lost indeed or whether we may yet search it out, arm it with compass and staff, and help it onto cleared level ground.

The pages that follow will be leaves from our notebooks, from the memoranda of reporters who travel, I trust, with seeing eyes and understanding hearts.

## *Chapter Two*

### BY THE WAYSIDE

BEFORE WE PRESS the starter and begin our Odyssey, we remember we'd better stop a minute and return a book we borrowed from a neighbor. We rush with it down our own block. In the vacant lot there at the corner are boys in their teens, playing listless handball at ten in the morning. Four or five of them are hanging around the neighborhood garage. We remember, now, that they always seem to be there.

We reach our neighbor's, and pause a moment to discuss the book with the son of the house, drifting down for a late breakfast, already weary with the prospect of another empty day.

Vividly, even before we leave, we realize that this stricken generation is not something that we know exists merely because we read about it in the newspapers. These are our own sons and daughters, and their friends. They are our nieces, our nephews, our own cousins, the children of our neighbors.

They are not, we see, only the children of the unemployed, that queer world that seems somehow outside our everyday lives.

In areas of chronic poverty we will naturally find many more of them. But in the homes of the marginal folk, the struggling, self-respecting men and women who have somehow managed to keep afloat during the lean years, are many. Even in the homes of the comfortable, where curtains are

crisp and furs are aired in the spring and fall, where sirloin steak is no novelty and the dentist's bill is not a luxury that can be eliminated—here too we find the unknowing conscripts of our army of outsiders: boys and girls with nowhere to go.

But come. We're packed and ready. We will see all of them, across the continent and back. When we talk about them, we won't always use their real names, because their confidences were often either given as such, or told without knowing their stories would find their way into print. And after all, what does it matter?

Let us stop first at the University of Virginia, at Charlottesville. Its time-mellowed bricks, its gleaming white tree-shaded porticos are as calm and pleasantly peaceful this early June morning as they were when Thomas Jefferson first saw them standing there.

Let's sit under an ancient elm before the row of rooms that have housed Wilson and Edgar Allan Poe, and probably some of our own forebears, and talk things over with Murat Williams. He is the editor of *College Topics*, the University magazine. He is graduating this year.

The son of one of the storied First Families of Virginia, his brilliance is so notable that two of the Richmond newspapers offered him jobs before commencement.

Tall and slim and sunny-blond, it would be comforting to regard him as typical of young graduates in the South. His articulate intelligence is leavened with humor. In himself, he is reassuring. Not until he begins to analyze his classmates does he startle us:

"We realize," he says, "that honesty, integrity, and industry don't get you to the top any more. Our fathers had a lot of set rules for success. We know the world doesn't play by them now."

Well, if those aren't the rules, then what are the qualities that are going to dominate us in a few years?

As we wonder about this, we roam down into the Carolinas. A man we meet in a garage invites us to a dance.

On the top of a mountain there's an abandoned summer resort. The hall is open to woods silvered by the minstrelled Carolina moon, and lighted ingeniously by a gadget attached to somebody's automobile.

Once upon a time a famous orchestra strummed here for smugly flannelled men, and women Paris-perfumed, sleekly groomed. Tonight a band makes up in perseverance what it lacks in skill. The dancers are young people, gay with the delight of taking time off from fear. Many of them work in the textile mills of the nearby towns. Some are clerks in the tobacco factory. Here's a chap who works in his father's hardware store. There's one who runs a filling station.

Their sweethearts and wives are slim, but not from calory-counting. Their hair is bright and carefully coiffed. Their frocks are gay, but even in this faint light we can identify those dresses: they come from those narrow milltown shops that sell their sleazy merchandise at twice their infinitesimal value, on the installment plan.

Our host is a perky little foreman in a canning factory, torn between loyalty to his men who want to form a union against a possible wage-cut, and fear that he'll lose his job if he does. He wants to keep his job more than ever, because he was just married last month to Sarah-Lee, the "best cook in two counties," a beaming matron with a shape like a pound of butter and a dowry of five small children.

Neither of them dances, so we sit in the corner, and the dancing couples come to us.

We meet Cousin Merle, a girl whose pretty freshness is

giving way to shadowed eyes and hollowing cheeks. "When you and Duke going to get married?" inquires our bride.

"I dunno. Duke got a notice yesterday with his pay saying the plant will keep the code as long as it can."

Who, we wonder, are those two doing that Broadway stepping right in front of the orchestra? Our friends call them, and we are introduced. They were to be married this month. Georgia has her trousseau and all her friends have been giving her "showers." Then the Supreme Court decision ended the code, and the shop where Fred worked lengthened hours, cut wages, fired men. Fred was one of these latter; he's been there only four months, and it was his first job since he'd quit high school three years ago. "Mr. Nichols really couldn't help it," Fred explained. "We knew he was losing money. It ain't much of a business."

Now Fred is going back to the old folks. Pa has a farm, and he can use Fred this summer. He and Georgia'll have to wait. Pa hasn't got a car, and his land is a long way from anywhere. Fred and Georgia are making the most of this last dance.

The boy who runs the filling station interrupts them. He's a lad with prodigious ears—he seems merely an attachment to his ears—and two of his teeth are AWOL. He is the only one here who has had too much to drink. Waving his arms like banners, he stands before us and shouts:

"If they don't do what Roosevelt says, I dunno what'll happen."

Well, we reflect, the chances are, judging from Merle and Duke, from Georgia and Fred and their uncomplaining acceptance of their muted wedding bells, nothing much will happen.



Somehow, that acceptance is not reassuring. Why are they so noble and resigned? That's not the role of youth. That's not the way of love and romance.

They are of good sturdy American stock, these young lovers. They've been to school, and so have their parents. We can understand Jonas a great deal better.

Jonas is a negro boy, the son of a tenant farmer. We find him digging potatoes in a Georgia transient camp.

More accurately, Jonas' father had been a share-cropper on a cotton plantation in the deep South. The family had been through hard times. The landlord who "furnished" his tenants was up to his ears in debt at the bank even before the bank failed. When that calamity fell, and the crop reduction program came in, he had to let some of his tenants go.

Not that Jonas knew much about all that. In fact, he didn't know much about anything. He'd picked cotton when he was a bright-eyed pickaninny at his mother's heels, and he'd picked cotton beside his stepmother. Sometimes he went to school for a while. Not for long. Nine times eight baffled him, and he never could remember whether the capital of Indiana was Wisconsin or New Orleans. Nobody minded, or even noticed, when he quit.

Now nothing had ever kept Jonas with his father and stepmother, his countless brothers and sisters and cousins and uncles and aunts but habit. Habit and a rafted roof and a certain amount of corn pone and pot likker. (At least, that's our impression of it.) So when this small black tribe migrated from the shanty it called home, Jonas drifted off by himself, bummed around, learned about transient shelters, and was neither happy nor unhappy. Mostly he'd "be so tired."

When he was at last offered a chance to work in this camp, with a bed to himself—something he never had had before—

three squares a day, twenty-four hours of work a week and six of "education," and—this last is a miracle, nothing less—a dollar a week in cash, Jonas thought he was in heaven.

Social workers heard his family had been settled on another farm under the direction of the Rural Rehabilitation, as it was called then. They tried to send Jonas to them, but their efforts were unavailing. He's astounded at the notion.

"Go home?" he exclaims. "No *ma'am*. The guvament plowed under the cotton. Now I'se awukkin' for the guvva-ment.

"Go home? Why, Miss, I got a better home 'n I evah had befo'. I got better clo'se 'n I evah had befo'. I has the best eats I evah et. An' jes' fer piddlin' aroun'."

Whether Jonas, ignorant and undernourished, will earn enough to pay for his own meagre subsistence we cannot guess. Poor in mind and body, produced by generations of pellagra, hookworm, poor eyes and bad teeth, he and his like are no worse in type than they were twenty years ago, and very little worse off than they were in the boom years, as far as we can see. But he's as much a part of this country as Tom Cary Stonehill, whom we meet in Nashville.

We stop to chat with the bank teller who cashes one of our travellers' checks when Tom comes up to the window. He's a carrot-topped six-footer with an apparently permanent sunburn backgrounding his really incredible freckles, and with muscles that would turn Strangler Lewis pale.

He deposits a handful of dollar bills and sort of mumbles, "Not much, Mr. Anson, but enough to discourage the wolf."

"What's the matter, Tom?" inquires the teller sympathetically. "Doesn't the younger generation want to learn to dance?"

"Guess I'm not fat enough to have 'em figure I'm light on my feet," he chuckles.

How did this husky take to a polished floor and a routine of repeating, "One-two-three glide?"

Here's what he tells us:

His father, a competent if not spectacular lawyer, died in 1925, leaving Mrs. Stonehill their pleasant home, a moderate insurance policy, and a few stocks and bonds. There was enough to keep the family, consisting of Tom and his two younger sisters adequately, though not amply.

His mother was a Chattanooga belle, reared in the tradition that women and business didn't mix. Even had she been better informed, however, she probably could have done no better than she had by following the advice of the scrupulous family banker.

Tommy went to public high school. Then, before he went on to college, he investigated the practical opportunities for a life's career. Engineering always had held allure. At the University he was advised that the oil companies were hunting on their hands and knees for trained men. So Tommy decided to become a petroleum engineer.

Midway in his undergraduate years came the crash. Tommy's mother fared no better than most. But her son mustn't leave college. What could he do? And wasn't it wiser to struggle and sacrifice for a couple of years, and then when he had his training, he'd get a good job, and if times weren't better, he could do more to help the girls. Reasonable, wasn't it?

"Only when I got my degree, they didn't need any more petroleum engineers," he explains. "Nobody needed anybody, not even a fellow to drive a truck.

"I was kind of worried. Then one day a friend of my kid

sister's asked me to teach her some new steps. That gave me an idea, and I started teaching dancing. Silly, isn't it?

"But things are picking up, aren't they? The big oil companies are bound to need men. I keep writing to them."

. . . . .

Well, oil companies always need some men. But they will never need the armies of petroleum engineers the colleges and universities unleashed on the industry before we realized there was a limit to the amount of oil it was advisable to pump from the earth. In the meantime, we wonder how Tom retains his knowledge in the years he's consecrated to Terpsichore. And what the personnel managers will think of that as postgraduate preparation?

At that, Tom is in no more hopeless a spot than Dirk Conway. Dirk is a messenger boy for the vice-president of a great Western bank. The appellation "boy" is merely a form. Dirk is almost twenty-three years old. We find him sitting back in his chair, hands behind his head when we enter the high, dark-panelled room, quiet with that cathedral calm that seems to pervade the sanctums of executives of solvent banks.

He rises as we enter. Mr. Vandeleur, he apologizes, is delayed. He has sent a message that he'd appreciate it if we'd wait. So we settle down in those huge tufted leather chairs. Dirk lumbers about, brings an ashtray, the morning papers. Somehow, he isn't old enough or heavy enough for that middle-aged gait.

"You capitalists don't get in much golf these days, do you?" I make an inept attempt at jesting.

"Say," he says, "I don't even get a chance to walk across the lobby any more. I've been here five years. Gee, I thought when I came I'd be president by now. But the boss spends

most of his time in Washington, and I spend my time right here, keeping this chair polished up. Don't think I'm griping. Not really. I'm lucky to be getting paid for it, the way the other banks have been falling like tenpins."

"Why don't you hunt a better job?"

"Not on your life! At least I know I'm drawing my salary every Saturday morning. Nobody ever gets fired here except for flopping. What a lug I'd be to leave a sure thing these days. Besides, the boss keeps saying he'll give me a chance downstairs as soon as there's a vacancy. Only," he adds a little ruefully, "it looks as though everybody down there feels the same way I do."

. . . . .

That's queer, isn't it, in a healthy American youth? Is this a hint that this generation is simply going to stand still all its life, clinging to its safe little pay envelope, because it's afraid to look for something better?

But there must be a spirit of adventure in some of those lads who leave home to hunt jobs and greener grasses. Something of the pioneer, we think, must animate these boys we see lining the highways, bundle under one arm, and jerking an expectant thumb, now the recognized deaf-and-dumb request for a "hitch."

Solly Levin disillusions us. Solly has just taken French leave of a New Mexico camp where social workers were trying with inadequacy equalled only by their extremely good intentions to combine an educational program with camp work.

"What the hell," he says pleasantly as we treat him to a hot dog and a cup of coffee. "Dig around half the time and listen to some old guy who thinks he's God's big brother tell me

I'm the son of the Pilgrim Fathers, and I ought to remember what I owe the President.

"Well, he's just a damn liar. My old man ran away from Russia. He tans hides on Seventh Avenue in the Big Town. Him and my stepmother has seven kids to feed on \$15.80 a week. The President didn't do nothing for him that I ever seen.

"My old man thought I oughta work. So I quit school, see? But could I get a job? Did Roosevelt get me a job? You're damn tootin' he didn't. I started lookin'. I rode the boxcars. I got hitches. I tramped on my own dogs. Say, I been lookin' over thirty-eight states for more than two years. I picked cherries in Colorado for six bucks a week. I swept the aisles in a cotton mill for \$4.40. Livin'? Don't make me laugh.

"You can't get three squares and a bed the way you can in any of these transient dumps. I'd look a goddam fool to work all day for less than I get for telling my wrong name, wouldn't I? No, lady. You go home and tell Roosevelt that every time the gravy train starts this baby's gonna be on it. How about a hamburger?"

. . . . .

A living, that's all, apparently, that Solly wants. He'd rather get it from Uncle Sam, now, than work for it. He's in vivid contrast with Edy Balch.

"Them chickens are giving us our chance," Edy announces as she displays a dusty brood of assorted birds.

We meet Mrs. Balch in western Kansas, out in the drought and dust-storm area. She's a bride of a year, and she tells us briefly, "Me and my Joe, we'd been sittin' around and sittin' around waitin' for times to pick up so's we could get mar-

ried. And they just kept on gettin' worse. Then they started this, so we took our chance."

Edy and her Joe are one of eighty families at work on a housing development, *not* financed by relief money. We bump out to see it, and are lost in admiration of their courage. Eighty young couples are completing the work of building their own homes: little boxlike white structures, naked under a burning sun, without even a promise of a friendly shade tree. Their owners contribute seventy per cent of the labor, and they'll pay the balance of the cash outlay and the money for the land over a long period of time. There's a garden plot with each, from three to five acres, irrigated now, and planted. Here and there the fruits and vegetables look—well, not precisely lush but nutritious. Most of these young folks either have in addition a plot of farm land in wheat, given by their parents, or, like Joe Balch, some other work such as trucking.

In common with most of her neighbors Edy's house isn't finished. So she and her husband are living in the chicken house. That is, the chickens live in one side, the Balches in the other. Edy turns down the flame in the gasoline stove under the plums she is canning to show us about. She's apologetic. She's cooking, making curtains, and Joe's carpentry work is spread out all in this one room.

Somehow, you'd trust the nation to Edy Balch, though she probably knows nothing of the principles of the AAA, the tariff, or such technicalities. Rather tall and very lean, with bright blue eyes in her brown pointed face, and hands that can run a sewing machine or handle a trowel with equal skill, she feels like a proud mother toward those unsightly birds, most of them now in the moulting stage.

"Right after we got them chicks, it rained," she recalls. "It rained three weeks. I didn't have no brooder. So I just

filled fruit jars with hot water and they crowded around them jars. That's how we kept the chickens."

"How can you do it?" we marvel, thinking of keeping mason jars filled with hot water, heated on that little stove, day and night for three weeks. "How do you people have the courage to stay out here in western Kansas anyhow when everything is so hard?"

Edy waxes belligerent. Her heritage of pioneer blood boils. "What's the matter with Kansas, Miss?" she demands truculently. "What's the matter with Kansas? They ain't nothin' the matter with Kansas. All we need's a little rain."

. . . . .

That was heartening, wasn't it? There, surely is the backbone of America, strong and pliant as ever. We scuttle along happily for a while. Until we come to a shack town on a desert hillside on our way to the broad tree-lined avenues of Salt Lake City.

Once this was a busy smelting community. Now the smelter is closed and four hundred of the families who worked there are stranded. A thousand persons with nothing to do until copper booms again, an event which today seems imminent as the millennium. There is no backlog of agriculture. There is no other industry. Nothing but the desert.

Along its narrow streets, shadowed by the sheer-rising walls of the canyon are homes: tiny black frame shanties, blistering under the sun, windows broken, shades crooked and torn, steps to the little porches crazy and insecure. Peer within and you can see dingy bits of essential furniture, women in Mother Hubbards moving slowly about their housework; men and boys just sitting.

There's an empty, fly-specked beer bar with one of those



little mechanical nickel-in-the-slot ball games thick with dust, and pool tables that have not known the click of balls in a long time. Men living on relief have no money for gambling. Here we meet Eddy Zaniewski, a sullen son of a Polish miner. Eddy too was just sitting.

"What are you going to do with yourself?" we inquire.

"What can I do?" he counters.

"Well, what do you want to do?"

"What does any guy want? A job."

"Have you ever thought of going any place else?"

"How? This hole is forty-two miles from anywhere. They ain't so much as a decent road. You can't even get a hitch out."

"I'd be sore if I were in your place."

"Where'll that getcha? In jail, that's all. The company still owns this dump. The minute you shoot off your mouth, your family's on the street and you're in the can."

"Are you going to just sit all your life?"

"Hell no."

"Why not?"

"Times are better. Things are pickin' up. I'll get a job. You wait and see."

But we haven't the time. Nobody has. After all, we are travelling through the youth of the land. And they're waiting in the station, for a train that is late, or irrevocably stalled.



## PART TWO

MOPE—HOPE—GROPE



## *Chapter One*

### THEIRS NOT TO REASON WHY

AS WE RAMBLE ALONG, across the painted sculptured grandeur of the Nevada and the Utah deserts, through the smoky, revitalized cities of the Middle West, over the rolling grain country, gold and green with wheat and corn, we meet many many more of these boys and girls.

We analyze as we go. And in estimating, we cannot help but compare their qualities and their conditions with our own.

Of course there never was a time when wise old men did not purse their mouths, throw up their hands, and wonder what the younger generation was coming to.

Nor was there ever a rising generation which failed to maintain that its elders did not understand that the world today is different from the world of yesterday; that their problems are fresh and unique to time and history as the Garden of Eden.

I remember how my elders chilled in very real fear as we in my salad days charlestoned down the Primrose Path, with debutante slouch and knee-length skirts; our bobbed hair, cigarettes, and hip flasks the very mark of Cain. They whitened when they read in the papers that we checked our stays at dances, and debated the relative merits of free love and companionate marriage. We ourselves felt like a corps of

Christopher Columbases when we made the remarkable discovery that after a man and woman married, they still remained two separate entities, something our naïve parents never could have known. No, never! And we figured that it naturally followed that those separate entities should be allowed full freedom from each other.

We can remember farther back than that. I often heard how my mother was reported the sorrow and despair of her family as she moved through the shattering era of bicycles, an unnatural unfeminine desire to go to Chicago to study music, and a degenerate conviction that women should be allowed to vote.

It has always been like that.

But most of my generation are pretty respectable citizens now, brightening last year's hat with a new doodad; worried about the interest on the mortgage; making poor Aunt Ida feel she isn't really a burden; and fervently hoping Junior will escape the epidemic of measles ravaging the fourth grade. Our vaunted freedom to live and love is ours only academically.

And my mother, in common with the rest of her friends, found the ballot and even Beethoven less vital than the business of making Florence eat her oatmeal; putting union suits into moth balls; lengthening last year's middy blouses; and balancing the budget so it included each week a few pennies toward our college.

So life flowed along. The younger generation scandalized its elders, and ultimately became scandalized parents, who saved their money, educated their children, and sent *them* out into the world, at heart serene in the conviction that grounded in good habits, virtue, and the fear of God, they would survive the demoralizing notions of the terrible teens.

Their children, too, they knew, would invest their industry and their thrift, rear their families, and then collect dividends in at least a good job, a secure and comparatively comfortable livelihood, and calm in the sunset years.

Still we of previous generations were not willing in our young years to accept life as we found it. Whether we wanted change in the conduct of our personal affairs or in the whole social structure, American youth has always been inclined to take the bit in its teeth. It has never been submissive to the current conditions.

Youth today, we note with trepidation, accepts its fate with sheep-like apathy.

It is easy to observe this in its attitude toward public problems.

Dixie's youth today would never fire on Fort Sumter. British tea and King George's taxes would be unloaded without protest by the young men of Massachusetts and Vermont. The Declaration of Independence is a page of fine type in the back of their history books. If they were to hear an orator aver that "when any form of government becomes destructive of these ends (life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness), it is the right of people to alter and abolish it," they would label him "Red," and walk out. There would be no Lexington and Concord, no Vicksburg or Bull Run. They would not fight for state's rights or any rights, because they have no interest in them.

Jed Morehouse is a perfect example of this. We meet Jed about six-thirty one morning somewhere in the Great Smokies. Jed is an intelligent, clear-eyed lad who runs a filling station in this remote spot. He tells us he came from Minnesota, but we never do find out how he got here; for immediately he begins to cross-examine us on the probabilities of war. (Our

car has District of Columbia license plates, so most people assume that we are walking archives of inside information!)

"Do you believe in war?" we interrupt.

"Isn't that like asking if I believe in death?" he parries.

"Well, put it this way: Do you believe this country should go to war? I don't mean should the United States defend herself. As long as we live it's unlikely that any power will actually try to cross an ocean and attack us. Will you go abroad and fight?"

"Honest, I've said I wouldn't a million times. I don't want to go out and kill anybody. Damn if I want them killing me. When we're all killed, what does it get you?" he replies candidly.

"They say we fought the last war for the Morgans and the duPonts. I guess we'll fight the next one for the Dakota wheat farmers and the Arizona copper kings. It's a lot of baloney. But when they begin waving the flag and playing the bands, I suppose I'll be signing up just like everybody else. What can you do? It's a lousy world."

Now, Jed is obviously at least high-school educated. He has read, and he can think for himself. It is true that the forces which cause war and lead our manhood off to the battle field are perhaps inexorable. But one somehow does not look for such passive submission in a youngster living in a mountain community where individualism is indigenous as the trees that wood these hills.

But peace and war are after all abstractions until the guns are loaded. This attitude, however, extends often to the personal lives of this generation. We notice that all too frequently. Take Matt McGrady, for instance. His uncle introduces us to Matt in the overstuffed offices of his small paper-box factory. Matt, he informs us proudly, is learning the



business from the ground up. He'll show us over the plant while he does some chores.

Matt is a concave youth of about twenty-three, not exactly inconspicuous in a blue pin-striped pinch-backed suit, a lavender shirt, remarkably patterned lavender polka-dotted bow tie, and lavender socks. He has an unruly mop of black curly hair and a mouth whose lines say louder than any words that his world is a great big yellow lemon. His uncle, we learn, lost his only son in an automobile accident, so Matt is now the crown prince.

And he doesn't like it. We deduce that from his bored air as we gasp—as we invariably do—at the spectacle of a machine reaching for a hinge, a top, a label, and then handing out a spice can complete without the aid of human hands.

"It would be fun to own all that," we comment.

"It's all right if you like it," he responds. Then, because we're interested, a boyish enthusiasm lights his hitherto dull face. "I'd rather play in the tinniest old band that ever hurt your ears than get rich as Rockefeller," he confesses. "Me, I play the French horn. I've been playing since I'm a kid. I thought some day I would play in the Philadelphia Symphony. That was my ambition. Do you think it's silly, ma'am?"

Of course we don't. Why doesn't he go ahead?

"Well, naturally Stowkowski wasn't just hanging around waiting for me. But I could have had a job, steady, down in the Royal Hotel's orchestra. I used to play with them Saturdays while I was in school. Did you ever hear them? The Royal Music Makers. They're on the air every once in a while.

"But the family raised such a row. My ma cried, and said I was ungrateful. And my dad said it wasn't every fellow

who had a chance to get to be boss of such a good business. Said times are hard. First thing you know I'd lose my job in the orchestra and be back on them. Besides, there isn't much money in it. I told 'em that there aren't so darned many good French horns either. And I'd rather have fun than money anyhow. But what can you do?"

"Have you got a girl? What does she think?"

"Aw—anything I do's all right with her. She'd as leave have a good horn player as a dumb manufacturer of paper boxes. Have you seen enough?"

This situation Matt finds himself in is not, of course, a phenomenon only of this period. There have always been misfits like him, pounded into round holes by circumstances they were too weak to combat. But we find them much more frequently today.

There is, of course, plenty of reason for this development.

For the first time in our history we have had no new frontiers for our young men when they needed them. This fact is vividly impressed upon us in Albuquerque. When we arrive in that city, a parade is winding through the main streets. There are covered wagons, not loaned by museums but owned by families who rode in them across the deserts, and driven today by the children of those very pioneers. There are ox-carts in excellent condition, and even the first hearse built in New Mexico. We are suddenly conscious of the fact that large portions of this country are very new.

The young men of today, however, cannot go west and grow up with the country. The depression took its toll of the great cattle ranches. Mining is no longer a matter of prospecting and luck, but scientific—and expensive—geological surveying. Lumber. . . . But we needn't catalogue all that.

Then too, industry and business are so vast and so com-

plex that the average individual seems such a very little cog. There is scant stimulus to individual enterprise in the modern assembly line. It's true that every boy and girl doesn't want to go into a factory, but the psychological effect of these great mechanized plants is apparent.

These young men and women have been hearing all this. They've heard so much blame-fixing that they've absorbed it. Heard that the greed of the international bankers caused the depression. Heard that great technological developments are keeping them out of jobs. Heard that the country is being run by and for a few of the powerful. Listen to Tony Picatti's attitude:

Tony is one of four boys hanging around the filling station in Youngstown where we stop one Saturday afternoon to feed and water the flivver.

The streets are black with people crossing and recrossing with an Olympian disregard for the possible consequences of a pedestrian encounter with a truck. There are grizzled workmen and fat mamas herding strings of excited children. Girls wandering arm in arm in faded odds and ends of their summer finery. Old women with huge market baskets. Hucksters yelling "Watermelons! Peaches, fine peaches!" There are lines formed at the doors of gaudy movie houses, and groups listening to radios blaring at store entrances. Any milltown on Saturday afternoon.

None of this interests Tony and his gang. They sit leaning against the wall, shiny of hair, dull of eyes, seeing nothing, doing nothing, planning nothing.

"What do you do week days?" we ask him.

His reply, if scarcely gracious, is succinct. "Nothin'."

"What do you want to do?"

"I want a job."

"What kind of a job?"

"Any old job."

"Is your father working?"

"Yeah. On relief."

"How long have you been out of school?"

"Three years. An' I been around to every factory an' I answered every ad, till I just give up. But say," and here Tony too notices the D.C. tags on our mobile mountain of mud, "Maybe you know about this Youth Administration. I seen Roosevelt has given fifty million bucks for fellas like me. What'll it do?"

We tell him: help you get more education, or a job for a third of the WPA time and wages.

"Aw nuts," is Tony's reaction. "I quit school because the teachers didn't like me. An' I kin pick up ten dollars a month shootin' the bones. I damn well thought it was just more hooley."

"If you don't like the way the President is doing things, why don't you men here organize and do something about it?" we query.

"Naw. What's the use. The politicians run everything, the dirty crooks. They'll run this Youth Administration too. We won't get nothin'. An' the big boys run the politicians. I'm wise, lady, I'm wise."

We'll hear these sentiments echoed again and again. These young folk have the notion that they are the victims of a juggernaut. And there's nothing they can do about it. It's their fate, the time when they were born.

In effect, they shrug their young shoulders, spread their hands, and say,

"Kismet."

## *Chapter Two*

### WHY GET SORE?

WE KNEW when we started that the world isn't offering this generation the opalescent future it spread for us. We went forth, in consequence, fully expecting to find the grapes of wrath ripening, to find resentment and rebellion.

Didn't we in our own youth, with a good home and a wondrous future, reform the world every afternoon from four to six, and as far into the night as we were allowed to sit up? The world was ours. It beckoned us and challenged.

So many of today's children are cheated of this birthright. Yet they don't whimper and whine. They aren't threatening us with machine guns and bombs. They don't wear black or brown shirts. At least, not yet.

Everywhere they are the same: chins up, a casual triviality masking bewilderment, mouthing smart cracks to smother questioning. They may blame us for this topsy-turvy world, but they resent neither it nor us.

We admire their sportsmanlike behavior. This adherence to the concept that you must take the cards dealt you and never squawk, is gallant as it is American. But may not "good form" be a synonym for supine?

We find this absence of resentment in varied forms.

Come over to the west side of Chicago, where you see row after row of two-story brick houses, none in too good repair. We'll stop at this one because there's a girl sitting on the

porch reading a magazine whose cover indicates it's one of the true-confession genre. We peer beyond her into the open door, and see a living room. Everyone in the block must be like it. It has a three-piece overstuffed "suite" of the cut velvet popular in the opulent days of 1929. It was probably bright blue once, but now it's rather a dun color, threadbare, and we can see the springs sagging under the davenport. There's a mantel over a gaslog. On it are some shabby magazines, a couple of polychrome candles, about the age of the furniture, and a rotogravure photograph of President Roosevelt in a ten-cent-store frame. There are a couple of landscapes on the wall whose colors challenge nature, even at its gaudiest. That's all.

"Does Mr. Green live here?" I inquire. I wouldn't know what to do if he did.

"No. My pa's Mr. Sorenson."

"He isn't a house painter, is he? I'm looking for a painter. I think his name is Green."

"No. My pa's a barber. At least he has a chair and a mug. Seems like everybody cuts their own hair these days, and he says for all the men *he* shaves the country has whiskers like Santa Claus."

The young girl is quite chatty. Her literature isn't very absorbing this hot summer afternoon.

"Do you work?"

"No. And gosh, I wish I did. Then I wouldn't have to stay home and wash dishes and diapers." Her face brightens with a daydream as she goes on. "I'd give anything if I had a job. I wouldn't live here, you bet, with ma complaining all the time because there ain't enough money, and pa sore because we always have the same old potatoes and gravy and bread pudding for dinner, and both of them nagging at my brother

Gus because he won't tell where he goes all day long. At least, they let *him* go out. But he don't have to care what he has on. I can't even go to church any more. Nothing to wear. When times are a little better, and I have a job, I'm going to have a room of my own and plenty of clothes. Not that a girl needs a lot of dresses, you know. Just one or two good things, with the proper accessories."

Somehow, none of this is a complaint, a plea for sympathy. Merely a statement of fact to apparently sympathetic ears. She isn't indignant that she has to stay in this uninspired home. She doesn't feel that her parents have cheated her of the gaiety and trinkets girls of her age enjoy so much. The situation is like this, and that's all there is to it. She'll change it when she can.

But after all, a barber's daughter is a member of a fairly stable social group. It is normally conventional. We would expect to find protest in some of the less substantial elements. Certainly we look for it in the gypsies of the depression, the transients.

But Solly Levin, who is typical, didn't express it, did he? All he wants is to "get on the gravy train." And R. C. Worden, the former athletic coach who was assistant director of a rather extraordinary California camp for these boys, confirms it. Mr. Worden had been in the transient service for some time. He's heard a lot of conversation among these young nomads, and he says:

"These boys come in. They're glad to light for a short time. If they don't like anything, they don't cherish any resentment. They don't hide their distaste. They just tell you about it and move on. They don't especially like their life, but they don't mind it, either, after a while."

Something of this permeates even the most intelligent and

best educated of the boys and girls we meet. They, after all, are the ones who suffer most because they are able to see and assay their problems most clearly. But even they are wistful rather than irritable. This isn't only our own observation.

Dr. Douglas Freeman, Richmond scholar and editor, who is a professor of journalism at Columbia University, on the board of trustees of the University of Richmond, and in constant contact with this generation at home because his oldest daughter is a sophomore at Vassar, tells us about it. "These young people realize they are going to have a tough time of it," he observes. "They are willing to work, at anything. They don't resent conditions they have to face. They know it's the fate of their birth."

Dr. Freeman spoke this in praise of the youngsters he knows. He's a wise man, and undoubtedly right.

Ben Crawford epitomizes them. We meet Ben in a drug store in Union, South Carolina. Ben was a famous football player, but that's not all. He not only brought home his degree a year ago, but also an honor key.

"I don't have to work," he brags. "The folks like to have me around the house a while. You must have fun, travelling this way. Where are you going from here?"

We tell him, the TVA.

"Now *there's* a place!" he exclaims. "Last summer I was a guide up there. I wish I had that job again." Then with a rush of boyish candor, "I'd give anything for a job. Any kind of a job. Gosh, how I hate just sitting around. But then, I suppose I ought to be glad I've got a home to sit in, the ways things are. And I am, really."

Somehow, this resignation without resentment is reminiscent of other young men and women I saw, in Berlin, toward the close of the Brüning regime. Not those on relief



rolls, but sons and daughters of families who still had at least a subsistence.

I saw them at coffeehouses, sitting all day long over a single beer.

I saw them at night clubs raucous with a sinister gaiety. I saw them in bookshops, poring over blatant displays of decadent erotica.

I saw them in libraries and schools, taking learning and still more learning as a narcotic.

Normal healthy young adults, these German boys and girls, but there was no place for them anywhere. Superlatively trained, they had never had a job, nor any hope of a job. They could not marry. They had no position in the community. They were outside of living.

We've all heard of them, often. They are the core of the Hitler strength. Hitler came and integrated them into the Fatherland, gave them work to do, an objective, a reason for existence, a reservoir into which they could pour their energy and their devotion. They *are* the Third Reich.

Now Ben Crawford and Solly Levin and the little barber's daughter don't know they are anything like those potential Nazis. They'd undoubtedly be outraged and indignant at the idea.

But then, no American demagogue has as yet arisen to make an appeal directly to them. No one has come along to clarify their condition for them, and to offer them something to fill the empty days, to vitalize their lives with purpose.

They do not realize the fact that for many of them the future may hold nothing. It's just as well. If they did, they would then be truly a band of lost souls.

### *Chapter Three*

## STALKING THE RED MENACE

IF RESENTMENT is so rare, how does it happen, then, that radicalism is rife among our young people? Resentment is one of the foundation stones of revolution.

We presume it exists because we read about it in the newspapers. Communism is the formula which attracts the boys and girls dissatisfied with the American system, we hear.

Well, we'd like to see this army recruited under the Hammer and Sickle, preparing for the March on Washington.

So we hunt for it primarily in institutions of higher learning because most revolutions are fostered by intellectuals. Moreover, we've read some pretty distressing descriptions of the way this college is honeycombed with Reds, and that university is turning scarlet as the result of the efforts of paid agents of Moscow boring from within.

We can't canvass every university, so we stalk the Red Menace on the campuses where we hear it's rampant: the University of Chicago, the University of North Carolina, the University of California, Columbia University, and for good measure, Dartmouth.

We're not provisioned for a long hard campaign, because we fully expect to stand at the door of any building, nab students, and learn from any of them, or all of them, exactly how they plan to overthrow capitalism, rid the country of

poverty, misery, and congressmen, and set up a government by the proletariat.

Actually, we have a difficult time of it. Instead of reaching for a senior and finding a Communist, we find the young Reds hard to find even with intense concentration and a very strong microscope. There's a Red Menace, to be sure, but it has to do with private bookkeeping. In addition, the average undergrad seems to be more agitated about his girl and the team than he is by the United Front.

There is, to be sure, a Communist group in each school. But the vast bulk of the student bodies are not crusaders for the New Day; they're not even interested. In fact, they're bored within.

We meet our first shock of disillusionment at the University of Chicago. We plunge past red lights all over the South Side in our haste, and park outside a tremendous castle which looks like our idea of what the American Embassy at London should be. It is placarded with signs that announce unshrinkingly that there are rooms here to let. These signs, however, rival in clarity the Greek letters over the door, indicating that this palace was, or is, the home of an exclusive fraternity.

Well, we won't find our radicals here. This organization, we recall distinctly, boasts as one of its most distinguished and generous alumni a Red-fearing plutocrat.

We hurry onto the campus. This University is extraordinary: lovely vistas through picturesque arches; superb middle-English Gothic towers, the older ones sombre with the time-grayed aspect of Westminster Abbey, thanks to Chicago's soft coal; but all jammed together like tenements in a city slum.

We sit down on the circular stone bench outside Cobb Hall and view our victims. The first is a young Jewish boy,

a short, compact lad, with a curiously troubled brow over his direct and very bright eyes. He's neither bold nor shy, but just a little uncertain.

"No, I don't believe in Communism," he says frankly. "And not because I think there's anything sacrosanct about the government of the United States, either. From everything I can learn about the way it works out, I can't see that Communism is any improvement.

"If I ever feel I want to make any drastic changes in the social system, I'll run for the Board of Aldermen or something."

Are many other students here interested in politics, we wonder. When this writer was in college in these very halls, we scorned the practical problems of the community. Our hearts were in Bigger Things. Our young friend tells us there is interest—keen interest—comparatively speaking. He himself is a Young Democrat. Recently when Professor T. V. Smith ran for the state senate, there was a great hullabaloo. Students went to political meetings and heckled the opposing candidate. They even patrolled the streets from midnight until four in the morning once, waiting to see, and if possible destroy, some anti-Smith pamphlets they had heard were to be spread about.

That never happened when I was young. Faculty members ran for office, and we never knew it unless one of the family happened to mention it. A brilliant and capable wife of a faculty member, Mrs. Paul Good, was the League of Women Voter's candidate for the legislature against a notorious ward politician, and we, with our newly won ballot, were totally uninterested, if we happened to be even informed.

We find a place at the table at lunchtime on the beautiful

dining terrace of International House. One earnest-looking girl and two young men of the pallid, ungroomed type we think of as radicals are in earnest conversation. We listen.

"There isn't a thing in the world to be gained by refusing to send Olympic teams to Berlin," the girl is arguing hotly. "Because the controlled newspapers and radios will simply tell them that we're afraid of competition with their athletes."

"Suppose the Olympics were in Moscow," we interrupt hopefully.

"It would be the same thing. We can't wipe out a country's political system by saying we won't play in their yard. Wouldn't we get a giggle if any of the dictatorships wouldn't send athletes over here because they disapproved of democracy! No, we've got to attack Communism and Fascism with some sensible methods."

Well, that's a disappointment.

We find out, after a while, why we have such a hard time finding our radicals. From this large student body, the Student League for Industrial Democracy has been able to recruit only between forty-five and fifty members. The Communist group, the National Student League, has about twenty-five, and this enrollment is less than it was two or three years ago.

Their members aren't precisely the intellectual leaders of the institution either. Most of their classmates think they are either maladjusted and neurotic, or else that they can't find any place else to go. We aren't sure that this is true; we have only the observations of a number of others, interviewed at random or introduced by liberal faculty members. They seem a representative cross-section, however.

The University of Chicago is a small item in a great indus-

trial city, and it makes the front pages on rare occasions such as the time a drug-store owner withdrew his niece because she was, he charged, turning rapidly Red.

The state of North Carolina, however, is constantly aware of its university. We hear owners of textile mills refer bitterly to it as "Our New Deal University"; and executives of a tobacco factory say they wouldn't have any sons of theirs in that "cesspool of Communism." A good many just average citizens have been students there, and its president, Dr. Frank Graham, is loved by all who know or know of him. That is, all except those who are quite sure he has a more than ordinary allotment of horns and tails!

Now this "cesspool of Communism" swirls around a vortex of six staunch followers of Stalin. Very few students know them. They don't make any special splash.

Obviously the University of North Carolina did not get its scarlet letter from these six little minnows. But the trend of thought is inquiring and liberal. That may be the source of its reputation.

There's a genuine interest in politics here, as in Chicago. The boys will listen to anyone. They will also give a noisy Zizz-boom-rah for anyone who sounds exciting. During the last year, Norman Thomas and Hamilton Fish both came down and harangued them. Both drew enormous crowds. Both spoke volubly, vigorously, egged on and inspired by enthusiastic audiences. After each lecture, the campus hummed with their philosophies. Alas, in a week something else had diverted attention!

Main Albright, a solemn-browed youth who was head of the student council, and now leads the Young Democrats down here, analyzes the attitude of his confreres for us. He's well able to do so, we are assured by Dr. Graham, several

faculty members, and a number of students, all of whom recommend that we look him up.

"We're not radical," he informs us. "But we want to face the future with understanding. So we debate and discuss all the issues. My organization, the Young Democrats, is quite active here. We invite the candidates of both parties down to talk to us. We size them up. We ask them questions. We also debate the Young Republicans and the Young Socialists.

"You can't catch us with demagoguery. We're on to all the empty phrases. A lot of clever catchwords will never fool us. We'll never sit awe-stricken at the old flag-waving, eagle-screaming political orator.

"We believe in a lot of the New Deal. We know we can't regulate the textile industry here in this state if South Carolina doesn't regulate hers too. And we say, 'If we have to amend the Constitution to do that, why let's go ahead and amend it. We believe in unemployment insurance and old-age pensions. If we can't have such things within the limits of the Constitution, or if we can't amend it, then let's get rid of it. It was written by men like ourselves. It isn't the Word from On High'."

Well, in some quarters, this is undoubtedly treason! At all events, it is an interesting manifestation in the South.

Even more indicative of the inquiring and liberal mind down here is the Institute of Human Relations, held here in the spring of 1935, promoted by a joint committee of students and faculty members, representing campus activities, several departments of the University and administration, and the Weil Lecture Committee. The Institute was financed entirely from funds raised for it; no University money was contributed. Among the groups which helped foot its bills are the University Y.M.C.A. and the University Student Union.

The week's lectures, mass meetings, seminars, and interviews brought such diverse persons as Chester Wright, public relations counsel of the United Textile Workers, Donald Comer, president of the Avondale Textile Mills, George Soule, Jr., editor of the *New Republic*, Dr. Shailer Mathews, James M. Landis, chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, and others.

There are other famous institutes at other colleges and universities, but they are only related to the campus in that their sessions are held in their halls, usually in the summer time. This one is a part of the school. It is a vital thing. The crowds that jammed each meeting were evidence that the young men here were concerned with human relationships in business and industry, in international affairs and government, and in inter-racial problems.

This has probably contributed to the notoriety of the university.

But don't think that North Carolina's state university is in any way representative of the South. The University of Virginia is a far better cross-section. It, too, has a famous Institute. But no one would ever accuse the University itself of being other than the last fortress of rugged individualism.

Murat Williams, the first young man we met as we began our journey, dissects it for us.

"No, you can't say we're exactly radical," he confesses with a sunny grin. "When the National Student League, which everybody thinks is supported by the Communists, began to chalk such things on the wall as 'Why die for the Du Ponts?' and 'Smash capitalist war,' the conservatives got scared and organized the largest chapter of the American Liberty League there is. The best automobiles in school belonged to it. But



it didn't stay exciting. About one hundred and fifty men went to the first meeting and about thirty-five to the fourth.

"When Clarence Hathaway, editor of the *Daily Worker*, held a mass meeting on the campus, members of the ROTC broke it up with heckling and rubber birds." (As free speech is one of the first tenets of individualism the faculty here promptly and vigorously reprimanded the hecklers.)

"We got awfully excited about Douglas' social credit scheme for a while here, but we don't like the New Deal," young Williams concludes.

So we are assured that the blue blood of the South is not really running Red.

Out on the West Coast, we find the situation very much the same.

At the University of California, where the student body numbers about 12,500, the Social Problems Club, a branch of the National Student League, has about thirty-five members.

Some of the students have taken up causes. "Free Mooney" is one of them—a plea that has been unsuccessful in this state for a good many years, and always a red rag to a portion of the population.

These thirty-five Social Problems Club members are intellectually rather superior citizens, according to the university's vice-president, Dr. Monroe Deutsch, but they cannot be said to be dominant. They achieve notoriety chiefly because huskies of the football-team variety are forever fighting "radicalism." It's their self-imposed public duty. As they are better equipped with muscles than these potential government-wreckers, they have no difficulty in tossing them into the lake.

We must, however, confess that this sun-gilded school, with

its pompous buildings that seem somehow timeless against the golden hills of Berkeley, does have one form of Communism that has taken root and shows signs of spreading. This is communal housekeeping. It's a product of this uneasy age. We'll investigate it presently and perhaps scoop the Los Angeles newspapers.

Even at Columbia University, in New York City, we find no influential radical group. Students and faculty members, including the frank and fair-minded Dean Herbert Hawkes, estimate that between five and ten per cent of the students may be found at the extreme left, and an equal number at the extreme right. The bulk of the undergraduates are in between.

The extreme leftists have control of the publications. That seems to be frequently the case. This is the reason, no doubt, why the quavering conservatives find such a Red menace in our universities. These radicals are not only vocal, but they find a medium for expressing their opinions, a loudspeaker that can be heard farther than their own healthy throats!

This is as true at Dartmouth, where the students are hand-picked, as at institutions which have no opportunity to select candidates for learning. Dartmouth has twenty ardent Reds, and they edit the daily paper. The editor-in-chief, this year, is the son of a wealthy movie magnate!

Most of the radicalism, and indeed, most of the intellectualism, in the colleges today is characterized by a "gimme" attitude rather than zeal for reform or revolution. Students, impressed by the current philosophies that government should do more and more for its people, are coming to think that they too ought to have more and more.

This manifests itself in purely collegiate matters. The libraries, they complain, are inadequate. They want more

laboratory facilities. They want more student aid. They see no reason for making the most of what they have. We find this condition everywhere—even Dr. Ernest Martin Hopkins, president of Dartmouth College, tells us it exists on his campus.

When we were young, and poor, we went about our business on foot. Our self-respect never permitted us to ask for a buggy ride.

Not so this generation. It wants a lift. If it doesn't get it, it just sits.

This, to many of us, is a danger nearer, more subtle, more destructive of our government and our civilization, than any youthful echoes of the Third Internationale.

## *Chapter Four*

### IT'S NOT THEIR BABY

BOYS AND GIRLS who have grown up playing marbles and jackstones on city pavements have the same fine detachment and lack of responsibility to their country and their community that a snooty English governess has toward a slum child perilously stuffing his stomach with pickles and peppermints. It's not their baby.

The reverse of this is true in the rural areas. Out in the corn and hog country, out where the alfalfa scents the air, where the wheat is a yellow sea, young men and women have a sense of possession and of obligation which is in vivid contrast to the cities' children.

These latter think alike, whatever their walk of life.

In the office of a famous Indiana manufacturing plant, we meet Ernest Thurston, graduate of Purdue University, class of 1933. He bumbles in with a sheaf of papers, a gawky young man with short-clipped hair that stands up like a pristine paintbrush, giving him a jolly, surprised-terror look. We are left alone with him a moment. So we ask what he is doing and how he happens to be here.

"Lady Luck, God bless her," he rumbles heartily. "I'm a chemical engineer, and the pros would tell you I certainly wasn't the brightest boy in the class. The two smartest I know of are working in filling stations right now.

"But you see, my father is in the real-estate business. He

sold a house to the assistant general manager here. That's how I happened to get my chance. Dad plugged. Gosh, he knocked down the price, and built on a sun porch, and put in a clock-golf course to put him in a good humor.

"Believe *me*, when it got near commencement time, a lot of us fellows were worried. We knew a lot of old grads jingling their Phi Bet' keys on milk wagons. I don't kid myself. This country isn't such a swell place any more for fellows who don't get the breaks. And brains and education don't always mean that opportunity's going to come lamming your door."

We ask him, as we asked Tony Piccati in the filling station in Youngstown, why, if he doesn't like conditions, he and his friends don't do something about them.

"What could we do? The country's run by a lot of lousy politicians."

"Well, it's your country too. You all vote."

And his response also is an echo of Tony. He said:

"Nuts."

This, we observe, is far more common among this generation than any sense of social responsibility. Neither the idealists of the New Deal nor the exigencies of their own problems have inspired them with the idea that the United States is a democracy in which the least of them has a voice. They merely mouth the opinion of their parents, that the country is run by capitalists and politicians, and there isn't much to do about it.

Naturally we find more interest in government than existed when we were young. Economics ties murders for front-page space nowadays, even in the more sensational newspapers, and if the murder isn't a really good one, it's apt to be shoved back near the shipping news.

Economics get into the movies, in the newsreels and in such

adaptations as the "March of Time." If you're not careful, you'll get it on the radio. We see a young chap in his soda-clerk's coat sitting in the cashier's cage of a drug store in Des Moines about 10:30 one evening, checking over his tickets. The radio is discoursing on the Securities Commission. We ask him how he happens to be interested in something that seems so remote. "It just happened to come on and I haven't changed the station," he explains.

The depression, of course, did that. We find as we travel that one of the surest signs of returning recovery is the fact that people are more interested in the improvements in this year's cars, and whether that old skinflint Banker Jones's wife is really going to divorce him, than in the antics of the Brain Trusters.

In the meantime, our young people, like our old people, have also developed more interest in public affairs. Every college and university tells us that the courses in social science are the most popular in the curriculum.

One university magazine reports that in the past the subjects that interested undergraduates outside the classroom, in the order of their importance, were sex, sports, and religion. Now the boys discuss sex, politics, and sports.

Bull sessions, those grand evenings of argument that begin anyhow, anywhere, are likely to take them up. Let a fellow come in to mooch a cigarette, and presently the room is blue with smoke, and crowded to capacity. The subject under discussion is quite as likely to be the fallacy of the concept of the economy of abundance as the prospect of carrying off the Big Ten gridiron pennant.

Their interest does not seem to carry them forward into any field of public endeavor, on the whole. They are, after all, inquirers, observers, not reformers. We have never had a tradi-

tion of public service or civic responsibility in this country, and it hasn't been born overnight in this generation.

Just as we find radicals scarce as sable coats, we find our young idealists rare in the political organizations.

Because we want to find the most zealous of them, we look up the Young Democrats in Denver, historically one of the homes of reform. We know that Senator Edward P. Costigan, a sincere fighter for his progressive convictions, is still a dominant figure in the Democratic party here. So we interview Charles F. Brannan, head of the Colorado organization.

He's a quiet young lawyer, frank to the point of indiscretion.

"We're an inquiring, but not exactly a crusading lot," he confesses.

The Young Democrats, we find, are not so young as they sound. The age limit is forty, and the average age is thirty. There are 1,800 of them in the state. Only about a tenth of them are women!

Brannan says he is gratified at the liberal tendencies of his organization, but he isn't at all sure they won't turn into old-line politicians. A great many of them, he notices, have actually more interest in patronage than in principles. They see the older politicians step in and give out a job here and there, and with this bait they aim to please.

Brannan himself worked in Josephine Roche's campaign for governor, and then for the mayor's election. After that, hundreds of Young Democrats came asking him for jobs.

All his group, he says, want the Administration to go farther than it has, but he isn't specific. He tells us there is no material here for demagogues of the Dr. Charles Townsend or Father Coughlin or Huey Long type, but the LaFollette school of liberalism is popular. Young Brannan, vigorous

apostle of the unicameral legislature, is proud of Senator George Norris's promise to come to Colorado and campaign for it if the Young Democrats will create enough enthusiasm for it.

Somehow, all this sounds well, but we have the impression that fire for reform in Denver and in Colorado has paled since the days when George Creel and Ben Lindsey carried the torch. The people have wearied of it.

We gather, as we drive along, that that may be the case the country over. The interest in the causes of social and economic disasters wanes as the "crash" slips into history. The zeal for change brought in by the Roosevelt Administration flickers into indifference. Pity for the underprivileged gives way to mounting irritation at the cost of maintaining them.

One high-school senior in Cleveland phrases a general attitude. "We're not backing the New Deal so very enthusiastically. Most of us don't know what it's all about. All we know is that President Roosevelt is spending an awful lot of money and is giving away a great deal more to the so-called needy. At least, they are only so-called around here. We know that our parents are paying for it, and what good is it doing us?"

The needy themselves seem to be following the general psychology of the Austrians we helped after the World War: first they were grateful, then they resented the fact that we were able to help them. At last they were bitter because they weren't getting enough.

In this, they too merely echo their elders. We find the children of the poor, like their parents, still have a sentimental devotion to the President. We find his photograph in one poverty-grim home after another, often beside some honored Old Country ancestor. It takes the place of the pictures of



Mary Pickford that used to stand around, and for about the same reason.

But the sons and daughters in the lower strata may love Roosevelt because "he's trying to help us." Yet they are cynical of his ability to do so. They believe that self-seeking politicians have emasculated his power and diverted his funds. They are disillusioned, and they see no reason for hope for change. Nobody has told them that they can do anything about it themselves. Leaderless, naturally they are inert.

The contrast to this attitude in the rural areas is vivid. We find it vigorously defined and expressed in Iowa—for an obvious reason.

We're ambling along, somewhere near Marengo, reflecting that when the band at the next presidential convention begins to play "*I-oway, I-o-way*, that's where the tall corn grows," we'll know what they mean. As we drive across this sun-dappled state between corn rows forest-tall on each side of the road, miles upon miles of corn with the wind making a gossipy rustling in the corn, we miss the route signs. We stop before a trim farmhouse, with paint so fresh we can almost smell it; nasturtiums and hollyhocks around it, new orange rocking chairs on the porch; and on the lawn a couple of those awful little wooden girls with sprinkling cans.

Just as we are about to go in and make inquiries, a young man drives up on a wagon high with hay, and tells us how to go on, in our car and in our politics.

"You city people," he instructs, "have got to see to it that the farmer has more money coming to him. If you don't work it out, we will. Because you can't eat your cheap cars and typewriters. And we can eat our potatoes and hogs. A new dress is mighty pretty, lady, but it isn't as nourishing as a pork chop.

"Now I'm not for killing off the little pigs every year. But you've got to do it until you cut down the tariff walls and make a foreign market for our lard.

"And that isn't all. We've got to keep our land good for growing. It has to be a national policy. We can't wear it out, the way we've been doing, treating it as if it never got used up."

He doesn't seem exactly sure of what the land preservation policy should be, but his vote is going to be cast to demand that there should be one.

He's very young, our hay-wagon orator. So, "Did you ever hear Henry Wallace speak?" we inquire.

"Sure. Lots of times. Now *there's a real guy.*"

We hear this sort of thing in varying places, from professors and students at the State Agricultural College at Ames; from the young girl who serves us sandwiches and milk at Tama, and so on.

These young men and women are doing more thinking and less floundering than in any other state we visit. The reason is easily apparent: Iowans have a leader. To them, while President Roosevelt is not Allah, Henry Wallace certainly is his prophet.

Mr. Wallace is no demi-god, speaking ex-cathedra, nor yet a forceful leader of men enlisting unthinking cohorts of enthusiasts under his banner. He has crystallized the needs of his people, and formulated a philosophy and a program. He has set young, and old, Iowans to cerebrating rather than shouting or following.

Consequently we find them increasingly conscious of their problems as a group, as well as individuals. We soon see that they have sensed their collective importance and their power to get what they want.

Occasionally—very occasionally—we find the sons and daughters of city laborers conscious of their particular problems. One day we read something interesting in the *Pittsburgh Press*. We reprint it here:

Through the closed door of a clubroom in the North Side YMCA could be heard muffled voices high in fierce argument.

"Who pays Old Man Kelly?" cried one voice. "We do. Every employee in the mill is making him richer every day! We, the workers, are making him—and hundreds of others—millions of dollars that some half-witted sons will inherit."

"How do you intend to stop it? You can't take it off of them?"

"We can take it off of them by receiving a just share of the profits. The money men have been robbing the workers long enough."

All this, according to the news story, are the lines from a play in process of revision. It was written by boys and girls from the unemployed ranks, creating their own drama of labor conflict. They live in neighborhoods which have seen labor struggles, and their drama has grown from the pattern of their own lives.

First of all they chose the subject: the failure of a group of mill workers to organize a union. The cast includes a foreman, a straw boss, a stool pigeon, an A.F.L. organizer, workers, and wives.

There's a moral: dissension never gets workers anywhere. There is a slap at women in the portrayal of the way wives, fearful of the loss of job and home, try to keep their husbands from joining the union. It also includes a scene that describes the futility of the company union.

Greatly interested, we go over to that Y.M.C.A. and buttonhole one of the youthful dramatists. He's very frank with us.

"It's all true, every word of it," he cries loudly. "But before you fight labor's battles, you have to labor. Me, if I ever get a job, I'm going to hang on to it. By God, I am. I don't care if I have to work twenty-five hours out of the twenty-four!"

That's easy to understand. Those Iowa farmers have some of the richest land in the world. They have work, and they can eat. They produce something the country needs, something it cannot do without. That is power, and they are beginning to realize it, and its potentialities. They have a leader who has clarified for them their importance and their obligations to themselves, their children, and their country.

These other boys and girls are young adults nobody wants. They are asking for something: the chance we once thought was every American's birthright—the opportunity to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. They have no sense either of responsibility or obligation to the country or society because they have nothing.

It's not their baby.

## *Chapter Five*

### SOMETHING IS BOUND TO TURN UP

THIS GENERATION has an unquenchable optimism that would do credit to Mr. Micawber himself.

Here they are. They are through with school. They are wiping windshields and checking oil. They are mixing chocolate-malted milk shakes. They are peddling patent pea-shellers from door to door. Petroleum engineers are teaching dancing. Auto mechanics are driving delivery wagons. Dieticians are selling dime diamonds and nickel bridge pads.

They are working part time—or no time.

They are forgetting the training they spent years to attain.

If they are self-respecting they don't marry; if they're not, they marry and add further to the family's, or society's, burden.

They've been marking time, with shuffling feet, all the years when young people normally lay the foundations of their life work.

We might expect the sum of all this to be cynicism and despair. We might expect them to see all too clearly that business and industry wants its new recruits to be beginners in years as well as in experience; and that opportunity has passed them by.

They do not face this fact. Or, they will not face it. They keep their courage up and their hope alive by telling themselves that times are better; that the drab present is only a

bunker on the fairway of their lives; something will turn up. That's been the refrain of all the substantial young men and women we've met.

There are some, of course, who face the night, with resignation, or revolt, or bleak despondency. Not so many, not nearly so many, as we fear to find.

We shall see, as we travel, that for an appalling number of them, this hope is tragically without foundation. How long they themselves will scan the horizon for the sunrise, we cannot predict. Whether they will remain a generation that is like a frayed and aging gentlewoman, with fading frocks forever starched, gloves bravely mended, shoes patched, hat redolent of gasoline, whose eyes dim while she looks always for a brighter tomorrow, we don't know. Whether they will ultimately be bogged in despair, potential recruits for some leader with a banner and a formula and a cause which calls to these lives nobody wants, we cannot presume to predict. Whether they will precipitate us, as a nation, into some dangerous new experiments, or whether they will make of us, for a while at any rate, a people content to say, "manana" is something only time will tell.

Thus far, they are comparatively content. They read of increased employment in the newspapers. They listen to President Roosevelt's pep-talks on the radio. They hear of others in the neighborhood polishing up their dinner pails and rushing off to beat the seven-thirty whistle. Presently, they think, they too will be at work.

This seems more like wishful thinking than a practical facing of facts. Yet we hear on all sides that this generation is realistic. We hear parents and teachers, preachers and professors, say these youngsters know they are going to have a tough time; they're willing to work, work hard.

And in some ways we see they *are* realistic. For one thing, they know the value of money.

In the "good old days" a pair of shoes to wear to school was as natural as snowfall and slush. We'd hear our family sigh, "What, those brown shoes gone *already*?" But our education didn't depend, as it often does today, on whether or not the family can finance another pair of shoes.

Frequently our mothers and fathers had to save and scrimp and sacrifice to keep Johnny in high school and send him on to college. But whether Johnny could go at all or not did not depend on his own efforts.

Spending money came in the form of an allowance from father. Nowadays, the cost of taking a girl to the movies and buying her an ice-cream soda is a matter for considerable planning and effort on the part of many lads.

That they are willing to do any work at all without a whimper, without any false pride, is a manifestation of dignity, a sense of proportion, and a practical acceptance of events which constantly rouses our admiration. Here's an example of it:

We're resting travel-weary bones in a long easy chair on the lawn of a great house just outside Philadelphia. Old elms shadow a formal pool, snapdragon rimmed. Goldfish flip insolent tails at the lily pads. The fountain tinkles, and so does ice in tall glasses as our hostess busies herself hospitably at a canopied table.

Here's the butler, with a message. "The gentleman is here about the liquor, madame."

"Ask him if he won't come out and have a glass of iced tea, Rogers."

We gasp. "Since when have you 'Main Line' families taken to inviting your tradespeople to tea, Emily?" I demand.

"Ever since the 'Main Line' families took to trade, lamb," she tells us, and is about to continue when the salesman comes down the lawn. A serious youth he is, with gold-rimmed spectacles, thin blond hair, and a chin that looks positive in spite of its tendency to retreat. He greets us solemnly as our hostess presents him, pronouncing a very famous name.

He takes his tea and plunges eagerly into business. "I've gotten some Clos de Vougeot, Emily, tête de cuvée hors ligne, 1919. I thought you'd like it." We have no idea what that is, but it must be something splendid. He's beaming as if he were Balboa discovering the Pacific.

Their transaction concluded, we promptly and rudely investigate. "I'm writing a book about your generation. So do tell us how you happen to be selling wine?"

He is direct, this scion of Tory ancestors. "We lost most of our money. I'd been raised like any one else. You know, school in Switzerland, St. Paul's, and Harvard. I can play polo and hunt—anything from ducks to tigers. But it isn't profitable.

"I didn't like to impose on family friends to get a job sitting around a broker's office. And I didn't know anything else. But I've always been interested in wines and liqueurs. Partly because my people are proud of their cellars and partly," he grins nicely, "by laboratory experiments. Since repeal I found I had a lot of friends who knew good liquor, and wanted it, and a lot who would like to be told about it. They were asking me for advice. I thought it would be a good idea to sell it. The family is scandalized. They'd cut me off with a shilling—if they had a shilling. But I'm earning my living."

He takes this so casually we don't dare to applaud. Anyhow, he's probably having more fun than he ever expected to.



We find fellows like this in almost every filling station. College graduates, together with boys whose only knowledge of colleges comes from the sport sections, fill up your gas tank and pump your tires—with sunny good humor, exuberant good manners—all the while hoping that something else will turn up. There was that boy in Des Moines, hoping for a job in the telephone company. And the one in San Francisco who wants to work for a shipping company. In Marietta, Georgia, a stocky youngster with wide-set eyes and an ear-to-ear grin, stopped in the midst of pouring in ten gallons.

“Will you excuse me just a minute, ma’am? I’ve got to meet that postman. My uncle is trying to help me get a job in a steel mill in Birmingham, and I’m looking for a letter.”

Most of them are like this boy: they’re counting on someone’s help. Their family; their friends. Friends of their friends. The college placement office.

They will even turn to the most widely advertised fountain of help. Last spring the President of the United States heard from a group of high-school seniors in Cleveland. “We are about to graduate,” they advised Mr. Roosevelt. “What are you going to do to help us get jobs?”

When we heard of this, we felt like expostulating, “Why the little loafers! What are they going to do to get *themselves* jobs?”

Now a lift up in getting a start has always been appreciated by every generation, and in other countries it is even customary. But our young people have prided themselves not only in pulling their own weight, but in climbing into the boat by themselves. We older folk had a lot of ideas about independence—being beholden to no one—getting a job on our merits, and all that. Maybe it was silly bravado. Maybe not.

Anyhow, the majority of the young men and women we meet today have no such notions. To the contrary, they rely on help.

As we wander over the country, we are constantly struck by this waiting for someone to find them a job, for "something to turn up."

Not that they are without energy, but they are signally lacking in individual initiative, in inventiveness. The few instances of it we find are spectacular by their very rarity.

We've heard of the diaper service, invented, it is said, by a couple of unemployed boys. Of the canine caterers, and dog-walking agencies, started here and there by lads with imagination. But those are sheer strokes of genius.

The Find-A-Job Club organized under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A. in Belvidere, Illinois, is the sort of thing we expect to find frequently, and don't. The club members announced to the town that they would do anything: spade gardens, beat rugs, paint signs, run errands—literally anything honest.

The club was organized with twenty-five members, young men between sixteen and twenty-five. Shortly after it began, eight of them were working. At the end of the year, twenty-four of them were employed in factories, offices, selling cars, and in other jobs.

Youth, Inc., is another.

This corporation runs a beerless beer garden. That sounds about as probable as an inside without an outside. Yet here it is, in Ferndale, Michigan, on the outskirts of Detroit. A dance hall with an ice-cream bar. If we don't get there early enough, we may not get in. It's always jammed, in spite of the fact that it's only one mile away from the biggest black-and-tan cabaret in the United States! There are about 1,800 people altogether on the Saturday we're there, all hours, alto-

gether. There's a pay roll of \$300 a week, and Youth, Inc., clears about \$300 a week besides. It has a membership of over five hundred in eight suburban communities.

An enterprising young man, one J. D. Cooper, a boy with no job and consequently more time on his hands than he needed, got together with Mabel L. Miller, an able social worker, and Mrs. Catherine Yates Pickering, and planned an organization to interest the boys and girls of these outlying neighborhoods, including Father Coughlin's Royal Oak. The idea sprang from the challenge of the local newspapers, which pointed out the fact that idle young people were spending their time in cheap and tawdry beer gardens.

Mrs. Frederick M. Alger of the Liquor Control Commission was interested, so interested that she gave the youngsters \$500. A newspaper woman, Miss Nancy Brown, of the *Detroit News*, went into her savings for \$300 more for them.

Youth, Inc., was ready to go. It got a clubhouse, on the Nine-Mile Road in Ferndale. You'll find it by inquiring for the Castle-on-the-Nine. As there was no point to spending money for labor when they had such a lot of that amongst them, the members went to work themselves and built a grand cement platform in the back yard and made a dance floor. They built their bar. They were ready for business. New York cabarets may well envy its success. Night after night people are turned away for lack even of standing room.

But autumn was coming. Soon it would chill and snow. What then? The Castle wasn't nearly big enough. But Providence and Mrs. Alger provided. A barbecue and restaurant were about to close. Mrs. Alger advanced funds; the members of Youth, Inc., banged and hammered and plastered and sewed for three weeks to convert it into Castle Gardens. The new hall opened on September 27th, and unlike so many

enterprises that fail when they put on airs, Castle Gardens is still packing them in and turning them away.

They are very busy, these young people. This is no organization that any political group can enroll. Says young Cooper, "We're a non-political, non-sectarian and non-partisan institution. I have a sneaking idea that our politics are not political at all. That is, I honestly believe that our younger generation is somewhat disgusted with the pork-barrel politics and grafting officeholders, whose principal idea is election. It's my opinion that youth is a little tired of all these isms and political maneuverings. I hope they will lead the way back to good sound government, which we so badly need."

J. D. Cooper, we note, is a young man of positive opinions. He'd be an asset in any business. He means it when he says he doesn't care for a lot of political dabblers. An assistant in the office of the Michigan representative of the National Youth Administrator at Lansing tells us with an appreciative chuckle that he wrote Cooper, asking if there was anything the Youth Administration could do for them. J. D. Cooper responded solemnly that there was nothing, thank you, but if there was anything Youth, Inc., could do for the Youth Administration, it would be glad to offer its services.

We find few instances of this sort of thing. We wonder why, and finally come to the conclusion that group activity is not a part of the American experience of living. We are the heaven of joiners, of course. We club together in all sorts of fantastic societies for our fun and for our charitable and political and religious enterprises. But making a living is an individual problem. Communal earning is likely to be suspect.

Shortly after our introduction to Youth, Inc., in Detroit we heard hysterical charges lodged against one of those wretched self-help communities. One of those pathetic and inept efforts

of families who never could stand alone any time, trying to prop one another, to barter among themselves and to make goods which they could trade with the more fortunate for their coffee and salt. "They won't acknowledge their connection with Moscow," the newspapers alleged, "but, like the Soviets, they have no church." We don't wait to see that community shunted from its feeble attempts to help itself over to the more orthodox, if less self-respecting, government relief rolls, at the behest of public opinion.

We don't encourage this sort of group earning, and we do not find very many young people trying it. The reason is undoubtedly because they do not think of it, and they are not blessed with such ingenious leaders as Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Pickering, as Mrs. Alger and Miss Brown.

No, our youth is not very inventive. It is much more likely to sit or plod, and hope and pray.

We cannot escape the conclusion that while this generation is gallant, it is also soft.

It is physically soft. Football coaches and athletic instructors we meet everywhere except in California tell us that their men have no chests, and they have no legs.

Our easy life is the cause of that. When boys don't ride in automobiles, they ride streetcars and busses. Anyhow they don't have to walk. Not far. Distances are not great, and transportation is good.

They have no duties which require physical labor. Time was not so very long ago when a lad herded sheep, sheared the sheep of its wool which was spun into cloth at home. He killed and hung the sheep. He chopped down trees and sawed the logs for the fire that cooked the mutton and kept him warm.

Nowadays we buy our clothes ready-made. We have light

by turning a switch; warmth by setting a thermostat. The average child has not the slightest idea where electric light comes from; how the automatic refrigerator gets its power; or how the water he reluctantly washes his ears with comes into the house. Instead of having to bury or burn refuse, he doesn't even wonder what happens to a can that once held baked beans.

This generation is waiting to be helped because it always has been coddled. Not only has its young life been physically easy, but it has also been relieved of every responsibility.

How often have we heard parents propound the theory that trouble comes soon enough; let the young folks have their fun? So the average urban child has grown into young manhood and young womanhood without any duties at home at all. He got his baseball bats and tennis racquets by asking for them. Father doled out pocket money, and mother did the cooking for picnics and parties.

Parents shielded their children, and they still do. This extends to every social level. Our cook is an extremely intelligent colored woman, a high-school graduate, early widowed, with a ten-year-old son.

"Mattie," we suggest one day, "we pay the coal company fifty cents to carry the firewood into the shed. Why don't you let Philip do it? We'll pay him the fifty cents."

"Oh, ma'am, he's too young to work yet, don't you think? Time enough when he gets older and has to. He's got all his life for earning."

Mattie had to work when she was a child. She helped her mother do white folks' washing. She had a job as a nursemaid after school when she was twelve. And today she administers her domain as expertly as any highly paid executive. We wonder about little Philip.

Our younger generation doesn't devise ways and means for shouldering its own burden because it doesn't know how. It was born in this specialized era, when people learned how to do one thing, whether it's optical surgery or tapping heels on shoes. Our civilization in this country has deprived us of ingenuity and versatility and responsibility. Regard this generation as the victims of it, or merely the natural product of it, as you like.

Anyhow, here they are:—sitting.

## *Chapter Six*

### YOUTH WITHOUT FAITH

THROUGHOUT the life of mankind, the poor and the sick of soul have found their journey to the grave made meaningful by faith; by the "substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen."

The tragedy of this generation is that it has no faith. They do not rebel because rebels must have a glowing faith in something. Our boys and girls neither believe nor disbelieve.

They have courage and they have hope, not because they draw on spiritual strength; not because they trust in God; or country; or even in themselves; but because they are young. The future is dun and blank with fog. They are bewildered, as men at sea in an open boat without compass or chart. They do not dare not to hope. They must row on and on, to that empty horizon, eyes straining, muscles aching. There is infinite pathos and a touch of grandeur in that gallantry without motive or purpose.

By and large, they have no religion. The church of their fathers belongs to the horse-and-buggy age.

We are not in a position either to attack or to defend the churches. True, on our journey, the Sabbath found us frequently in church. We recall a wide-doored church in the South where the roses and honeysuckle are no more gracious a memory than the kindly pastor who preached quite simply on.



the brotherhood of man. Fondly we remember a little adobe mission in the Southwest. We sat in magnificent cathedrals; and in a house of prayer in a town so poor that Catholics and Protestants used the same church—an altar at each end with reversible streetcar seats. We sat in a Christian Science church in Chicago and forgot to listen to the services, because on the wall in illuminated letters were these words of Christ Jesus: "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make ye free."

We did not try to find out wherein or why the churches failed; that is not the field for journalistic exploring. But we do find that they have not been able to help their youthful worshippers to know the truth; nor are they able to inspire faith.

This is a sweeping statement, with many, many exceptions. However, it is significant that religion has no place, or at best no vital place, in the lives of the majority of the boys and girls with whom we talk.

In some places, particularly in the South, and in the small towns of the so-called Bible Belt of the mid-West, and in New England villages, they go regularly to church. Sometimes they go because it's sociable, and it's the thing to do. Sometimes they go because their families are devout, and it's easier to go than to argue or hurt their parents' feelings.

We find a great many like a boy we see polishing his car before a wistaria-hung veranda near Baltimore. "Aw," he responds to our question, "what's the use on a grand day like this? I don't want to sit up straight and listen to our preacher. He's a good guy, but he's never heard of the facts of life."

Others, not always in poorer neighborhoods, give reasons that echo those of a girl we find drying her hair on the porch of a dingy home, one of a block, all alike, in Toledo. "Why

should I go?" she demands bitterly. "What does the priest care about me? All he's interested in is the money he can collect."

Yet others have no opinion or reason whatever. They just never think of church at all any more. Apparently it gave them nothing when they were children; they've almost forgotten about it. In this they aren't much different from their mothers and fathers.

Ghosts of their Puritan forbears must have rested uneasily the Sunday morning we tramped the back roads near Middlebury, Vermont, and saw a young girl swinging in a hammock, reading the magazine section of the Sunday papers, and inside at a window two young men playing a card game to the accompaniment of the radio, which was not singing hymns.

Whether their own parents would have been pleased with the two giggling waitresses we meet going to an early Mass, we can't surmise. "We go early, so's to have the rest of the day with our boy friends," they tell us. "We promised ma when we got jobs in town that's one thing we'd do. Go to Mass every Sunday. So we go to the early one to get it over with. And anyhow, we don't have to listen to a sermon, either."

Catholic youth is more inclined than others to keep the forms of their faith, but we cannot conclude that they find its spirit satisfying.

Jewish boys and girls are no less indifferent. We are in New York City on the Day of Atonement, holiest of holy days, a day dedicated to fasting and prayer. We see them crowd the shops. They are standing in line at all the movie houses. The streets, the restaurants are filled with them in high holiday humor.

Churchgoing and prayer by the calendar are not an integral part of faith; they are no measure of spiritual stature, to be sure. But there must be some relation between them. The churches cannot be giving much strength. They cannot be spreading the Word of God with much conviction if we are to believe the evidence of our eyes and ears.

They do not interest the despairing by hope of Heaven, nor do they deter the wayward by threat of hell. Judgment Day has apparently been more completely discredited than Hoover in 1932. The question of the soul's immortality, something we debated with queer solemnity in our day, has been submerged. Our youth are so absorbed in living today that they do not look at tomorrow. It follows naturally that they do not shift their gaze to eternity.

Their lack of faith is not confined to indifference to theology. They do not believe in this country. They have patriotism in that they can be relied upon to fight for it. But it is a possessive, instinctive patriotism, a mass sense of self-preservation rather than a crusading belief in the things America stands for. It is an inherited and a press-propagated dislike of "foreigners," a fear of the strange and unknown, rather than a burning belief in the principles laid down by the Founding Fathers.

"Democracy?" jeered a boy sitting on a park bench in Tucson, Arizona, whittling a stick into nothing in particular. "What do you mean, democracy? It's a hell of a democracy when some stuffed-shirt in New York closes the copper mines over in Ajo, so my dad ain't got a job. What right's he got to say we can't eat? But he does it just the same."

"Opportunity?" cries a young school teacher in Indianapolis bitterly. "Don't talk to me about opportunity! I've got 'absent' marks after the names of too many youngsters

who can't come to this public school because they haven't any clothes."

Our boys and girls have discovered that the American ideals are idols of clay. Or they seem so because they haven't been streamlined and air-conditioned. And youth desperately wants to believe. It's not like paunchy middle age, which wants what it can get easily. It hasn't the resignation of the hardening arteries and chronic rheumatism of the sere and yellow years. It wants something to fight for and feel it would die for.

They've heard that the battle to make the world safe for democracy was a war for the House of Morgan and the Du Pont family. They've heard that justice depends on your ability to hire fancy lawyers, and to bribe court officials. They've heard that liberty is bought by pacifying racketeers; by ringing up the cash register.

They don't believe in these principles. At least, they are skeptical of their reality. Yet these young men and women would fight for them if anyone came along and translated them into their own language and experience and needs.

Hitler never marshalled the German youth by promising them a land flowing with milk and honey. He offered them something to fight, and suffer, and sacrifice, and work, and die for. He used all the old German credos—all the appeals to serve which stir the devotion and the ardor of ever-idealistic youth.

A young man who lives in Bramwell, West Virginia, phrases all this clumsily but exactly. "I never was a Red or anything like that in college. One of my best friends passed out about two hundred rubber birdies to be used in heckling Clarence Hathaway at that University of Virginia meeting. But since I've been home, with nothing to do, and run up

against some of these 'Root, hog, or die' prosperous business men and listened to some of their criticism of Roosevelt, I've been thinking of Russia. One appeal has grown in my mind. Even the women work there. And furthermore, they have an ideal.

"I know that Communism is bad. That everyone loves his own home, his own lawn, his own lawn-mower, and all that. And I'm not just mouthing phrases, either. Still, one has to have an aim in life. I'm not going to be taken in by any of these movements that we hear about. I'm no fool. But if anything should overcome my reason, I would welcome it and work like the devil. I think all the energy dormant in youth has been dammed mostly by its own good sense. It's a good thing for the established order that America has the background it has, that we've been bred to it, or we wouldn't sit here being cheated of life by old men and old ideals."

These college students are more articulate than others, but they all say the same things. They speak for their generation. Another lad, at the University of Chicago, waiting for news of a job at the placement office, corroborates all this.

"None of the fellows I know have found any way to make life meaningful," he says. "My life has no purpose. What is all this activity for? Last year, I wanted a certain ordering, a reasonable amount of security. Now I don't know. I live in Gary, Indiana. Things are often pretty bad out there. You feel sorry for those dumb hunkies that work in the steel mills. I'd like to be a Messiah. Sure I would. But on what basis? I don't believe in revolution. So I'll just leave it to some other lug who is sure. Like Bertie Morehouse. Bertie has a plan. He's going to take his diploma back to Elkart, go to the legislature, and on to the White House. He'll prob-

ably end in his real-estate office, fat, and a bore about his golf score. I'll wind up the same way. Right now, though, I want something to believe in. Lots of us do. That's the reason the scholastic movement has been so popular around here."

It's true. The philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas has taken this campus by storm. The logic of that long-dead medieval logician holds more followers in this college, reputed a hotbed of Communism, than the principles of Marx and the practices of Stalin. It's a comfort, perhaps, that the European battle cries leave these young thinkers cold, but it is a melancholy commentary on the spiritual food we provide.

Not only have the old ideals failed this generation, but the old virtues have showed tinny where the gold leaf has worn off. We heard from Murat Williams, secure son of a secure family, with honorable and historic tradition behind him and a brilliant future ahead, that "we realize that honesty, integrity, and industry don't get you to the top any more."

If we'd had time or inclination to argue, we'd have debated this. Then and there we could have formulated a speech to use all the countless times we heard this propounded, by all sorts of young folk in every walk of life. But we probably wouldn't have gotten far with people who had seen money come magically and disappear like a penny from a prestidigitator's palm. Who have seen men jobless after years of loyalty and devotion. Who have seen Samuel Insull, first charged as Public Scoundrel Number One, then cleared by the courts, and ultimately cheered by sentimental victims who heard and heard again that "he didn't mean to do wrong. He lost everything he had too."

We cannot expect them to believe that integrity, honesty, and industry are essential ingredients for success when they see movie actresses and crooners dripping dollars because they have sex appeal or treacle in their vocal chords. Or when they

hear that the wife of the President of the United States has earned almost as much for a few radio talks as the nation pays her husband for the arduous duties of its Chief Executive. They neither criticize nor condemn any of this, but it has nothing to do with the fundamental virtues.

And yet, these boys and girls are not without ethics. They are developing a code closely related to the exigencies of their lives. It is not going to be a code of opportunism. They have standards. They are sound ones, for these young people are absolutely honest. They are without hypocrisy, and they don't lie. If we hadn't observed this ourselves, we'd know it because everyone from such keen observers as Dr. Douglas Freeman in Richmond to social workers in San Francisco pointed it out.

Here's an instance: We are talking with a group of undergraduates at Dartmouth, sitting over fried scallops and boiled potatoes in "The Wigwam," the restaurant where all the college comes sooner or later. Across from us is Aldis Butler, the president of the senior class and of Paleopitus the student-government body. He is a tall blond engaging lad from New Haven with an interest in people that amounts to genius.

"If your degree depended on one examination, and you didn't think you could pass it, would you cheat?" we pose a question.

Young Butler looks grave. It's a long time before he replies. At last he says, "I don't know. I honestly don't know. I've never been up against such a situation, and I don't expect to, so I couldn't say."

"Would you condemn a classmate who cheated?"

Again he gives the matter careful consideration. At last he comes to this conclusion: "I don't believe I would condemn him for any moral reason. In fact, I'm sure I wouldn't. That

would have to be something he'd have to justify to himself. But I think if I knew it, and I had any dealing with him afterward, I'd be kind of suspicious of him. I'd always wonder."

This is vastly different from us. If anyone had suggested that we might cheat, we'd have thrown up our hands, scandalized, without hesitation, and expressed shock and censure with vigor and promptness that would outdo old Cotton Mather himself.

On the whole, however, they are without discipline. To-day, they follow their impulses. They have to have reason for checking them. Without religious or social checks, indulgence is normal and restraint is unnatural. In this they differ from their forbears who never used to have to justify the bridle. These young people want a bridle, but we haven't provided it, and fashioning their own is a slow hard task.

The reason for this is not hard to discern. Our bridles and checkreins were fashioned in a world profoundly different from the one in which our boys and girls find themselves. Life in this country in its early days was hard; comforts were meagre. Self-discipline was essential to preserve life itself. Hardihood became a virtue. Right and wrong were clear-cut, defined, and accepted. That was not so difficult when food had to be wrung from stony soil, cattle cared for, and common cause made against unfriendly Indians.

Dr. Max C. Otto, professor of Philosophy at the University of Wisconsin, explains the difference today:

"Every thinking youth is accustomed to the view that the physical world of which he is an integral part is a vast machine which moves according to mechanical principles having no reference to human wishes or worths. He is so accustomed to this view that he may be unconscious of it.



"This vast mechanism, in which every human event has its allotted place, listens to no reason and responds to no cry. Every thought, every feeling, every act and aspiration of every man, woman, and child is caught in an interlocked order of things and pushed irresistibly on.

"Philosophers, scientists, and religious leaders have offered clever demonstrations to show that logically this makes no difference to men's higher interests. Men are no less responsible for their conduct, and every value of life remains just where it was.

"But men do not live so much logically as psychologically, and psychologically it does make a difference. Faith in human initiative is weakened; moral distinctions appear of doubtful validity; idealism becomes apologetic; and men simply do not feel as responsible for their acts as formerly."

The natural reaction to this new mechanistic world is to be found in the new psychology, in the attitudes of boys and girls. Dr. Otto, who talks with hundreds of them every year, analyzes it. "The great word when we were young was discipline," he recalls. "Be master of yourself. This was the law and the gospel. Today the great word is liberation. From every side youth is instructed that repression of natural impulses is the root of all evil. Was there anything remotely comparable to this in the instructions repeated to us? We learned to associate liberation with a sense of shame. The modern way is to put the odium on inhibition. If young men and women still hold themselves to standards—and they do—it must be with a feeling of doubt, if not of guilt, for in the back of their heads is the conviction that repression is bad and liberation good." \*

\* From a speech "Ideals and Character" given before the Mid-West Conference on Parent Education, February 1928.

This all tallies with our observations. Right and wrong for our boys and girls are based on the validity of their impulses. This is a denial of traditional morality, and there is no substitute for it except their experience with society.

Theirs is the responsibility for evolving a system of ethics which meshes with this modern world: with social necessity and also with tradition, with the continuous stream of life and thought. We don't help them; we talk one way and act another, emotionally tied as we are to the ethical apron strings of another simpler era; in action actually moving according to the dictates of an infinitely complex period.

Philosophies are born with frightful labor pains. No wonder our boys and girls are anguished, and bury their minds and ease their souls in St. Thomas Aquinas or the "True Confessions of a Society Dope Addict."

## *Chapter Seven*

### FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE

ASK NINE young people out of ten their views on morality. They will immediately begin to discuss sex and marriage.

Well, sex and marriage are highly important in any system of ethics. It is in this realm that our younger generation is making its greatest strides in formulating its philosophy and crystallizing its code. We are likely to be scandalized and even incredulous. We do not like to believe in changes in custom, and consequently we lag in adjusting ourselves as a social whole to an accomplished fact.

Westermarck, historian of marriage, demonstrates this. He tells of a primitive people whose young men were not allowed to marry until they had killed two crocodiles, thus proving their social value. After a while, crocodiles became scarce. So young people lived out of wedlock, and the older generation moaned and tore its hair at the immorality of the young. Then the priests, the lawmakers, reduced the quota to one crocodile. That helped until crocodiles were practically exterminated. But it was a long while before they gave up the crocodile idea altogether and so restored morality.

Young men and women today are not at all different. Jobs have been as hard to capture as crocodiles. Society has not admitted that. Therefore young lovers readjust matters for themselves.

They will marry on much smaller incomes than we did,

lower in ratio to the dollar value and to the standard of living than Americans have dared to marry on for a long time. We meet a young reporter on the Rockford, Illinois, *Morning Star*, now a successful journalist under the tutelage of that appreciative managing editor, Barney Thompson, who believes in giving this generation its chance. "My wife and I got married," chuckles this reporter, "on my third salary cut."

Not that they like it at the time. Nobody does. But we notice constantly that one of the conspicuous qualities of this generation is its sense of values. A home as good as the Joneses is not an essential. Nor are "twelve of everything" as important to a bride as her ring and marriage certificate. They are willing to budget, and try cheap recipes, and market around, and paint old furniture rescued from barn or attic. Wear last year's hats and walk to work, for the happiness of living together.

They will even marry on relief. This is a perfectly natural phenomenon, though social workers and most of the neighbors are outraged and indignant. We meet a couple of them in Newark: June and Benny Sokolski. They are living in two rooms. There's a bed and a bureau and a chair in one of them; a table, two chairs, and a radio that will soon be valuable as an antique in the other. It isn't so tidy as we'd prefer it. The drawing room is also the dining room and kitchen. The kitchen is a rusty old coal stove and soapstone basin with mouldy greenish brass faucets, in a recess that must have been a closet. When we call, in the afternoon, the breakfast and lunch dishes, about five of them, have accumulated, and clothes are still draped over the bedroom chairs. But there are gay rayon curtains at the window, and on the table a bunch of purple asters. Benny is reading the papers, and June is doing her fingernails.

We hear their story. It's uninteresting and usual. June's family and Benny's family were both on relief. Two relief rations for thirteen people. Benny was rejected for a CCC camp because his teeth were too bad. He couldn't have a work relief job because his father had one. June just had to stay at home and help her mother and take care of hungry squalling brothers and sisters. She could have had a job helping at the hairdresser's on Saturdays, but she could earn only about three dollars doing that. If she had taken the job, the family would have had a wage-earner, and automatically been cancelled from the relief rolls.

June and Benny were sweethearts. They figured it all out quite reasonably. Single people had to live with their parents. That made everybody's portion scantier. Families got relief. If they were a family, they'd have rooms to themselves—a luxury beyond price—a relief ration of their own, and maybe even a work relief job for Benny, not to mention the paradise of living happily ever after. So they are content; their mothers and fathers approve. Nobody feels badly but the social workers and the taxpayers who hear about it.

The neighbors, who constitute public opinion, usually applaud, because they are probably on relief too. In San Francisco's Italian colony, the friends of the "relief" bride and groom, no matter how poor, manage to give the young couple a magnificent wedding, with all the customary requirements of food and drink and music. It makes the relief administration very very cross.

These young people, to whom poverty is as normal as day and night, have no qualms about this. But the young men and women in the marginal families, the self-respecting boys and girls who cannot conceive of accepting a dowry from an unwilling public, are the ones who suffer. They are the

people of stamina, the ones who count. Their frustrations and adjustments are significant and important to us.

The more timid, the more conventional, simply accept the fact that they cannot marry until they have a job, or have a job on which they can support a wife, and suffer whatever maladjustments of personality which may result.

What about the others? Not those who are naturally lax and unmoral, but those who refuse to be wholly cheated?

We put this question to Dr. Jacob Kepecs, of the Jewish Charities in Chicago, a wise and sympathetic and experienced man. He responded simply for the lads and lasses of his race whom he meets every day,

"They just don't go to the rabbi."

We put this question to countless boys and girls, as clean and as honorable as our own. Some are working on infinitesimal salaries. One of these is a playground director in Memphis, doing an admirable job on sixty dollars a month. Another delivers drugs for his father, who probably won't be out of the red until the chain stores gobble him up. Another is a gigolo in resort hotels, an occupation more maligned than profitable if this wholesome boy is typical. A fourth takes tickets in a cheap movie. There are many others recorded in our notebooks, just like that.

We put this question, too, to boys and girls without any real fear of economic insecurity. To Yale students, and girls at Smith College. To boys and girls whose families, or whose own endowment of intellect and personality, insure them of work they want and homes of their own. To a young man in a firm of public accountants. To a clever girl in a great advertising house. To an interne in a Kansas City hospital. To a young commercial photographer. To a girl in the promotion department of a publishing company. And so on.

There was a striking uniformity in their response. Don't think it was unanimous. Naturally not. But they voiced a code, and it is as much a convention as that which binds the *jeune fille* of France to innocence, real or assumed, until marriage to a man of her parents' choice.

To these young men and women it is right and decent to have intimate relations with the person you love. But you mustn't be promiscuous. That's cheap and vulgar. That's immoral.

And you mustn't, if you are a man, get a girl "into trouble." If you do, you must be prepared to "get her out." That's imperative.

How do these young people learn about contraception? We wonder about that, and finally gain courage enough to ask them. We are rather shy and afraid of this personal question. They themselves are usually frank and impersonal.

"We get it," our Yale student informs us, "from the other fellows. How does anybody find out? We ask our friends. Sometimes we kind of hint around. Sometimes we ask."

They also glean advice from drug stores, some of which leave pamphlets around. We aren't shocked at this. We have seen whole window displays in reputable chemist shops in respectable neighborhoods, in London.

But we are somewhat taken aback to learn that they also secure information and purchase devices from filling stations.

Nowhere do we encounter anyone of this age who says he or she was enlightened or in any way equipped to meet this situation by their parents, or by their family physician. Nor had any of them ever visited one of the few birth-control clinics.

They are not aware, of course, that the members of the medical profession are not permitted to instruct them in such

problems, for other than reasons of health, any more than they know that a great many doctors ignore this ruling.

■ We do notice, however, that Catholic boys and girls subscribe to this code only slightly less frequently than Protestant or Jewish lads and lasses.

Sometimes young men and women have never learned the elements of contraception. Sometimes these unscientific hit-or-miss methods fail them. Here is where tragedy and crime are born. I happened this summer to have the melancholy opportunity for a glimpse into it.

A girl was sitting on the platform of the elevated railroad in Chicago. Something in the way she sat, not seeing the trains stop and start, intent on twisting and untwisting her handkerchief, caught my eye. She was one of those nondescript stenographers, completely standardized in Garbo curls, plucked eyebrows, carmined nails, short-vamped high-heeled sandals, and sleazy crepe dress, faded from many home cleansings. Today her thin figure was tense, and the rouge on her cheeks stood out like the circles of paint on a wooden doll.

Impulsively I took the place beside her. "What's the matter? Might I help?"

"Thank you. No."

"I'm a stranger. I live in another city a long way off. Sometimes it's a relief to tell your troubles to someone you don't know and whom you'll never see again," I suggested.

She twisted and untwisted the handkerchief a couple more times. Then with a gulp she turned and said, "I'm going to have an operation. And I'm scared. Oh . . ." two mascara-dark tears trickled down, "I'm *so* scared."

"Are you——" Somehow, I knew what kind of operation she meant. "Are you going all alone?"



"Yes'm. Our office is closed Saturdays, but it's the only day my boy friend has work. At the A and P."

"I'll go with you, and wait, and then I'll take you home in a taxicab."

"That would be swell. You see, I'm scared of—of afterward."

I was too. I'd never been on an expedition like this. I wasn't sure that I wouldn't be an accessory to a crime, or something of the sort. But refraining from being an accessory wasn't going to prevent the crime.

On the "El" I heard the story, woefully commonplace.

Marian worked in the office of a lithographing plant. Her salary of nineteen dollars a week was the only income for a paralyzed father, an old aunt, and her three motherless younger brothers and sisters. She and her boy friend had been sweethearts since high-school days. He'd left school before graduating, to take a job in a factory that manufactured agricultural implements. As soon as she finished her business course, and he got a raise, they'd be married. She had wanted to be able to do something, "just in case." Which was lucky, because her father had his "stroke," and the young man was one of the first to be laid off when the depression deepened. He'd never found anything else regularly.

"We love each other. There didn't seem much chance to get married. We couldn't wait forever," she explained.

And now this calamity. There wasn't any other way out. Her frantic young man had sold his watch, borrowed among his friends, and she didn't know what else, to raise the fifty dollars.

We climbed crumbling brownstone steps and entered an apartment curtained against any ray of daylight and grimly illuminated by bare unfrosted bulbs on a brass chandelier.

The waiting room was all furnished with huge davenports and chairs of dirty green plush with broken springs and imitation mahogany frames. There was a tremendous fly-specked picture of the Colosseum at Rome over the gaslog fireplace, which was littered with matches and cigarette butts.

A nurse with greasy dark face and bulging eyes, in a none-too-clean uniform minus a couple of essential buttons, finally came and told Marian to "Come on in, dearie. If your friend wants to wait, it'll be a couple of hours anyhow. The little girl will need a rest. Doctor's orders."

Then Marian disappeared, rather a valiant figure after all, behind high thick doors. No sound penetrated them.

I waited. Others came. A mountainous Italian woman with her slim young daughter, both wailing. I was a little stunned to see Mama, not Nina, waddle between those doors.

A trembling little Bohemian factory girl joined me for a bit. "My sweetie's Jewish. His family won't let him marry me. He ain't got a job, so there's nothin' else we can do. But see what he gave me to wear." She showed me a violently yellow rayon nightgown, stiff with lace.

A tall, fair-haired girl with ringless fingers and a haggard young man, both obviously gently born and bred, held each other's hands in a corner in silence, occasionally smoking. After she left him, he walked up and down in a solitude that defied intrusion.

At last my companion appeared, exhausted but relieved. "It's all over. He says I'll be all right."

I had a letter from her later. She was all right. If no better job for her "boy friend" and no possible change in her own life may be so described.

There is integrity and dignity in this little stenographer. She and her young man would marry if they could. They

want to marry. This isn't enough. If she ever had any qualms of conscience, they occurred long ago and are forgotten. Most of these young men and women have the same attitude. The boys do not expect, or particularly want, the Victorian concept of purity in the girl they marry. Sincerity and honesty in this respect is far more important to them.

Nor do they marry to satisfy a confusion of romantic and physical impulses as often nowadays as in our courting days. For one thing, this candor and effort to know sex and its significant place in their lives gives them a better focus.

For another—and this holds the germ of beauty and richness of living—marriage is more important to them than that; deeper than that. Puzzled, rudderless in their shifting world, these young men and women are seeking emotional security in one another. In an existence that holds meagre promise, they are hunting comfort and hope and stability in marriage. Lonely, they feel that by pooling their loneliness they will find warmth and light.

In this they differ from my generation. We of the jazz '20's were full of brittle ideas: We held that human relationships were the most uncertain things in the world. We went to the altar prepared for the divorce court. Of a half-dozen of my own closest schoolday friends, only one is still married to her first husband. We talked a great deal about experiments: companionate marriage—free love—maintaining separate domiciles—the importance of a wife's independence and her own career, and all such poppycock.

Not so these youngsters.

Their escape from cynicism is a modern miracle. They have seen us fail and fail again. They think they are different, and we think they are right. In their own homes they have seen parents divorced. They've lived in homes where mothers

nagged and fathers criticized and found fault. They have seen how marriage can become an intolerable bond, unbreakable through years of habit. They have seen in the movies and read in the magazines the glamour thrown about extramarital adventures. They have seen the hardships and miseries endured by husbands and wives in poverty, misfortune, and illness. Seen families struggling on the border of subsistence, burdened with elderly and infirm and incompetent relatives. Seen the sacrifices demanded by the presence of children, and the heartaches caused by carping and interfering mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law.

Yet they have not soured, nor disparaged the institution. They are well educated in its hardships and pitfalls and probable disappointment. Nevertheless, they regard it as the best, on the whole, of human institutions.

They do not disapprove of divorce, but regard it only as a last resort. And like most people, think they know how to avoid it.

"When I get married," that Memphis playground director said, "it's for keeps. I want a wife I can count on, and who'll be sure I'll play fair, too."

"When I get married," that commercial photographer hopes, "I want a wife who's a good fellow. Not a party girl, you know. I want her to be fun to go out with, but more fun to be home with. Not too smart, either. Not dumb, but—well, not quite as smart as I am. I guess that isn't asking for such a lot of brains. I hope she'll like staying home. I don't care if she works at home. A writer or an artist or something like that. But I wouldn't want my wife to go to an office every day."

That seems to be the consensus, though there is a much broader tolerance of working wives even than in our day.

They don't mind if their wives have money, these modern young men. They think it would be very jolly indeed if their prospective helpmeets either earned it (not in business, but in some home-keeping profession) or inherited it.

They are, however, quite conventional in feeling that their wives should spend it for luxuries; they want to maintain their homes and live on the whole on the basis of their own incomes.

Young men and women in rural communities, however, are usually wholly conventional, we believe. They do not as a rule question the old-fashioned ideas about marriage. There is, of course, an obvious reason for this. A wife is essential to farming. There is no question of her working. She is an active partner in the family enterprise. The farm cannot go on without her. Children, too, are an economic asset, not a liability as in cities. Consequently we find young people in the agricultural states taking marriage without any questioning. In Iowa, for instance, we find the most stable homes. And it's not an accident that in this state the richest people have the largest families.

Young women, on the whole, we find, are much more realistic now than we were. Don't you remember when we held that a woman's career was the big thing in her life? That husbands came and went, but the capacity to work, to create, to earn for one's self was forever ours, a solace and a core for life's adventures and misadventures?

Girls of this decade are not so silly. They neither over-emphasize nor minimize their ability to earn a living, if they have it. They recognize its importance in an era of economic vicissitudes. But the liberty to gulp a cup of coffee, put on galoshes and an old hat, and wade out in the sleet and slush to office or factory isn't quite so wondrous a life to them as to us

who were closer to the days when women fought for the right to earn a pay envelope.

On the contrary, the average girl of today sees marriage and a home as a far more desirable career. She knows it isn't much easier, but instinctively she feels it is more satisfying. She is realistic about her objectives. She doesn't look at matrimony through pink lenses, but solemnly, as a business.

We hear this carefully explained when we go to see the great dam being built by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

To the maidens of Norris, the TVA town, Prince Charming is no combination of Clark Gable and a millionaire's only son; but a companionable soul who will support a wife and three children. And he may hitch his wagon to the not-too-inaccessible star of \$2,800 yearly income.

We gather these statistics when we blunder in on five girls gathered together on the screened porch of one of those model dwellings which remind us of nothing so much as the doll-house of our childhood dreams, snuggled there on the side of a ravine. Two of the crisply ginghamed misses are daughters of a carpenter; another is the oldest member of an engineer's family; the fourth's father is a bookkeeper; and the last of them the daughter of a miner from a lawless Kentucky mountain county.

A card game is the excuse for their conference. Michigan poker, whatever that may be! Eavesdropping, we note they aren't very earnest gamblers, these girls ranging from a mature fifteen to eighteen years old. Jobs and husbands are more exciting than a full house, or whatever is high in Michigan poker. While we are admiring our hostess's electric kitchen and the vanity dresser her husband had made in the trade shop, we hear this chatter:

"When I'm a dress designer, I'm going to specialize in

smart cheap clothes," a green-eyed red-head announces. "I don't see why a house dress has to look like a sack of salt."

"I think it's wonderful you can do that. I'm going right on with my business course. I'd rather be a teacher, but they say there are too many teachers for the jobs as it is," sighs the lass with the Norma Shearer headdress and, yes, Mary Pickford dimples.

"Even so, if you can be a *good* teacher don't you think you ought to do that? Don't you think you ought to take your own talents into consideration?" argues the potential cross-roads Schiapparelli.

"Well, just so's I can do *something* till I get married, I'll be glad," a shy third contributes.

Right here we give up and crash the party. "What kind of husbands do you want?" we inquire.

They are unanimous. A man with a job. A man who can keep his job. A fellow who will share some of their interests. He doesn't have to be rich. As we've said, \$2,800 is plenty. And they don't want careers, these intelligent-looking girls. They just want to work until they marry, and to have their training as a backlog to any exigencies. Home-making, as they see it, is a full-time occupation.

How did they arrive at this estimate of a satisfactory income? At school, if you please. In the cream and brown schoolhouse where classes are fun because they relate to the practical business of everyday living. Not, you understand, how to get and hold a husband, but how to cook and budget and can and sew. How to plan nutritive and novel menus at a minimum of expense. How to market and to store. How to handle problems of interior decoration, in the basic principles of mass and form and color and design; of utilizing space; of structure and wearability. How to keep a happy home for

husband and children. There'll be no nagging, they brag magnificently. Mealtimes will always be happy times, regular parties. And so on. They have a complete program for living happily ever after.

Young people tend to tackle the problems of marriage like this, practically and realistically. In the last few years schools and colleges have been here and there instituting courses in marriage. Classes are uniformly crowded.

The best one which comes to our attention is conducted by Professor Ernest R. Groves, at the University of North Carolina. The classes are open to men and women and taught separately. Students in the senior class, graduate students, and juniors in professional training, such as law and medicine, may elect them. These courses are among the most popular in the university.

This course developed eight years ago, at the request of the male students, and was an outgrowth of conventional sociological treatment of marriage and the family. The instruction now covers all of the larger legal, psychological, sociological, and physical problems of marriage.

Here is an interesting clue to the student reaction to this subject: the textbook in this course is Dr. Groves' five-hundred-page treatise. The manager of the largest second-hand bookshop in Chapel Hill reports that although he sells seventy-five or a hundred copies each year, thus far he has never been able to buy a second-hand copy, nor has he ever seen a second-hand copy advertised in the catalogues of the large second-hand stores, anywhere. Moreover, whenever we attempted to draw this volume from the public libraries of New York and Washington, or from the Library of Congress, every copy was always out!

At New York University, the Student Union offers a course



in "pre-marital hygiene," given before members of the senior class. This Student Union secured the services of Dr. Marie P. Warner, assistant medical director of the Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau of New York City, for these courses.

Dr. Warner's lectures go deep into the problems most young people discuss among themselves, and on which they rarely have any scientific information. In addition to the sociological problems, they include the problems of the unmarried, covering personal physiological subjects such as continence, masturbation, and sexual relationships, combined in the same lecture with economic subjects such as budgeting, insurance, and old-age security; social problems, petting, education, family relationships, etc. They include discussion of accepted viewpoints on monogamy, family planning, birth control, emotional value training for parenthood; helpful factors leading to successful marriage such as age, education, mental equality, mutual pliability, similarity of tastes and standards, tolerance and financial understanding. Dr. Warner discusses further actual preparation for marriage, such as engagements, marriage hygiene, the art of love.

Dr. Warner is a practicing physician, and undoubtedly some students consult her professionally because of the information they receive at her lectures.\*

All this should tend to reassure the viewers-with-alarm. Some of the less adaptable of the oldsters may shake their heads and mourn the pre-marital relations of this generation. They may be horrified, refuse to believe it of their own sons and daughters.

They needn't. Their own sons and daughters are clear-eyed and square in this matter. They would be safer if their

\* Courtesy of a memorandum supplied by Don H. Ecker, director of New York University Student Union.

parents were somewhat more frank, more understanding, more cooperative. There would be fewer Marians if we did not insist on lip service to our own conventions and our own taboos.

But they need not fear that the basic institution of our society is toppling. It is not. This generation wants lasting marriage. It is building a sounder structure and even strengthening the foundation—when it has a chance.

## *Chapter Eight*

### WANTED—A HERO

WANTED: a hero.

Yet if American youth were to insert this advertisement in newspapers from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon, we doubt whether they would find a satisfactory applicant.

This generation is no different from any other in its inherent need for someone to admire, to imitate, to follow.

Yet it is a generation without great heroes. There is a curious paucity of public men and women who fire the imagination of young people today.

Because the men and women who inspire hero-worship and imitation are an indication of the character of their followers, we constantly ask boys and girls whom they admire most. Whom they would like to meet. Who are their gods.

We find so many answers, and such a remarkable lack of any unanimity in any field, that we are surprised.

Take baseball. There was a time when the great American sport could be relied upon to produce a man whose very name excited. "Dizzy Dean" is the best-known and the most spectacular ball player this year, but his popularity cannot be compared with "Babe" Ruth's. On the whole, the fat bumbling Ruth is still "tops" to more boys than the redoubtable "Dizzy." Alas, like all idols out of the spotlight, he's being forgotten.

Nor has boxing produced a champion to take the throne

in the heart of enthusiasts which Jack Dempsey held in his day. Dempsey was a brave, lovable pugilist. He appealed to good sportsmanship. His successors do not.

Movie stars are no different. There are so many, there's such a bewildering collection of types, that we find none of them has roused the love and devotion Mary Pickford enjoyed in her heyday. Nor does even Clark Gable do the damage to youthful hearts that an hour of Rudolph Valentino was guaranteed to cause.

We find to our surprise that Major Bowes' Amateur Hour is, in general, more popular than any single radio star. We easily understand why; he inspires hope in those cherishing ambitions of their own.

This great vacancy in the front ranks holds in other fields.

Lindbergh is a lost leader in aviation. We can remember when he symbolized all the winged beauty, the courage, the shining simplicity we love so well. As an incarnation of an ideal, he has failed. Perhaps because of his lack of kindliness.

Nor have we any great warriors since General Pershing, as grand and gallant a gentleman as a nation could hope to honor, has slipped backstage.

None of our political leaders make spirits leap. President Roosevelt is still beloved by many of the young people who talked with us, because "he's trying to help us." But he too has suffered the erosion that occurs naturally to men in high office unless they have the stature of a Lincoln, the pyrotechnics of a Theodore Roosevelt—and the dim distance of a Washington or a Jefferson.

Captains of industry are no longer titans.

Certainly the current crop of demagogues has no appeal to youth. Most of them play on cupidity, like the late Huey Long, or on prejudice, like Father Coughlin, or on old age,

like Dr. Townsend. None of them sounds the bugle call to youth.

Our boys and girls naturally find figures to get excited about. Hero-worship is as much a part of boys and girls as their livers and lungs. They are more likely, at the moment when we roam among them, to place their faith and their adoration at the feet of someone who emerges in their own lives. They aren't hard-boiled. On the contrary, they are very responsive.

Some educators who are leaders in their limited sphere, dominate their students. Dr. Frank Graham, president of the University of North Carolina, is one of these. A gentle man, his courageous liberalism is contagious. His undergraduates know him affectionately as "Dr. Frank," and he knows the quality of their tennis, their financial perplexities, and their intellectual fumbling. He leads by love.

Robert Maynard Hutchins, the young stormy petrel of the University of Chicago, is in strange contrast to his predecessor of my undergraduate days. I still wonder who was president of the university in those days. Young Hutchins manages to evoke enthusiasm based on intellectuality. We find a large number of young men and women stirred by his own youthful personality to a determined and loyal defense against the dislike he arouses and the factions he creates.

Ernest Martin Hopkins of Dartmouth was one of my own youthful heroes. As a nineteen-year-old cub reporter, I interviewed him, and came away with a worshipful heart. He exalted and inspired, and somehow instilled a faith in myself. Time has passed. I could no longer remember what he looked like, or a word of what he said, but even now I felt I would follow where he went. Curious to know whether this was a lasting quality, I journeyed to Hanover, to find that the same

spirit which called forth blind devotion in a green reporter animates the boys on his campus today.

We could go on listing a number of educators who have qualities of leadership in their own milieu, but they do not go far beyond their immediate domain.

We meet individuals like these here and there. Social workers. Men and women in community centers. Directing officers of CCC camps. We are heartened as we go along by the men and women we encounter who are able to capture the loyalty and faith of the boys and girls they know.

But they are always restricted in their efforts and in their following.

The only man we hear of with even a state-wide influence is Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace. We hear him quoted, with or without credit. He is greatly beloved.

Now, there is nothing of the demagogue or the spellbinder about Henry Wallace. Before we went to Iowa, we imagined that he would be the last person to appeal to youth. His methods are professorial rather than dramatic. His attack is on the intelligence rather than on the emotions. He is no handshaker; he's quite shy. Yet the boys and girls in Iowa think he has statesmanship and sincerity. He makes an appeal to their reason.

That is, apparently, one way in which a leader may appeal to our youth.

They are responsive, too, we observe, to a call on their cooperation. We find a pathetic instance of it in Memphis. The Children's Bureau there, directed by Miss Clare Kummer, a salty, practical white-haired woman, is the city's parent which adopts and rears orphans no one else wants. She has been seeing them grow up, go through school, learn to be secretaries, stenographers, mechanics, plumbers—anything for

which they show fitness and liking. And, with no hope of using these trades, she sees them losing ambition, losing all interest in progress, all hope of work. She watches them face existence with no reason and no answer.

"Two years ago," she tells us, "this bureau had a fifty-per-cent cut in funds. This was a calamity. So we went to the boys and girls and said, 'We're in trouble. If we can't economize, half the children will have to go.' Their faces brightened. They became part of a living program. They had something necessary to do. They tried the queerest economies. Used soda and salt instead of toothpaste. They cut lawns and washed dishes, and did all sorts of things they had never done before because the sharp color-line down here does not usually permit them to be done by whites. One boy of sixteen got a job in the North. When it came to equipment, he insisted on exchanging some of the clothing, such as woolen socks, for some less expensive. Another girl managed to make a gingham dress for seventy-nine cents. And they all were happier than when they had more. They responded instantly to leadership which asked for active sacrifice."

Thus, we see that the type of leader who gets a positive response is one who evokes an ideal of service. But a principle too will evoke a following.

The one abstract concept on which youth today has a positive opinion is peace. We never meet one single boy or girl who does not have concrete ideas on the subject. We recall how thousands of students came out in the rain in the spring of 1935 to take part in a demonstration for peace.

In January of that year the *Literary Digest*, in cooperation with the Association of College Editors, launched a "College Peace Poll" in 118 American colleges and universities. Ballots were mailed to 318,414 students.

It is significant to note that this experiment elicited the heaviest percentage of returns in the history of *Literary Digest* polls. More than a third of the ballots were returned.

The questions are worth recording here: To the query, "Do you believe that the United States could stay out of another great war?" 68.65 per cent voted yes; 31.35 said no. "(a) If the borders of the United States were invaded, would you bear arms in defense of your country?" 83.54 per cent announced that they would, and 16.46 per cent stated they would refuse. "(b) Would you bear arms for the United States in the invasion of the borders of another country?" To this 17.82 per cent of the students averred that they would, while 82.18 per cent of them insisted that they would not.

The ballot asked further, "Do you believe that a national policy of an American navy and air force second to none is a sound method of insuring us against being drawn into another great war?" Here too the division was lopsided: 37.26 per cent think it is, and 62.75 per cent feel that it is not.

The *Digest* further asked whether "In alignment with our historic procedure in drafting man power in wartime, would you advocate the principle of universal conscription of all forces of capital and labor in order to control all profits in time of war?" The balance of students are overwhelmingly in favor of this suggestion, for 82.35 per cent voted "yes," and only 17.65 per cent voted "no."

"Do you," the ballot went on, "advocate government control of the armament and munitions industries?" Decidedly they do. The poll was 91.02 per cent for control and only a meagre 8.98 per cent against it.

Finally the questionnaire asked, "Should the United States enter the League of Nations?" It is interesting to remember that this poll was taken at the time the United States entry



into the World Court was defeated in the Senate. The League lost in the colleges by 49.47 per cent for our participation, and 50.53 per cent against it.\*

Thus we see that young men are opposed, for the most part, to war. They are not only against it vaguely, but they have concrete ideas about it.

Alas, we also find, in our own informal inquiries, that a great many of them are dubious about the possibility of peace, and resigned not only to the fact that they will fight, but that, under a barrage of propaganda, they will probably want to. They confess that they will probably succumb to whatever appeals may be made to their emotions and their ideals. They have no Briand to mobilize them by his eloquence into a passionate, a militant force for peace.

Nor is the idea of war as abhorrent to many as we hope. Those boys who are just sitting around or frittering their time at footless chores might happily respond to a call to arms. It would give them importance. They would be needed, vitally needed. They are not needed now.

We suspect that the peace demonstrations were more a marching in the rain in behalf of an ideal rather than a deep-held devotion to peace. We oldsters with grim memories of war have created the anti-martial sentiment that exists. Our younger generation reflects more of our reaction than their own desire.

There is danger in this. Youth will enlist under the banner of a crusader who makes his call on their need to seek their Grail.

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## *Chapter Nine*

### HEART'S DESIRE

AMBITION PULSES with the heartbeats of this generation just as ambition burned in youthful spirits in the days of the first Harrimans and Vanderbilts, in the epic era of Carnegie, and Huntington, and Hill.

But with this difference: Youthful hopes do not soar out among the cold and distant stars. Youthful eyes are no longer bright with dreams of empire-building. The far-off iridescence of great fortune has little lure for them.

Fame, too, interests but does not inspire them. They regard renown as they might a steam yacht: something as improbable as it is enchanting, and too remote to strive for.

Perhaps this is because they have seen the Insull empire collapse—seen the railroads wobble—banks teeter and fall. Perhaps because they have seen the evanescence of savings with their own eyes, and heard every day that swollen fortunes will slip into limbo together with child prodigies and last year's reducing diets. Perhaps this is because they have seen public acclaim, parading under the guise of fame, come and go readily as a racketeer's money.

Whatever the reason, today's young people in general have no deep-running desire to earn a great deal of money or to attain immortality for their names and deeds.

Security is their heart's desire.

At first we cheer this. How satisfying, we purr, to have at last a generation of Americans who know that fortune is transient and fame is tinsel. How heartening to see young men and women who do not measure life's values by our own yardstick of material success; who are finding deeper values.

Then we pause and wonder. What does it mean to us if youthful eyes become myopic and never see the higher peaks—the far horizon? What does it mean if youth's urge for adventure gives way to the cautious search for security? The rash zest, the coltish audacity of our boys and girls, however absurd, has been vital and exciting as spring. We have cheered their headlong courage because we were a young nation, and we naturally responded to daring.

This new generation seeks security, the hope of the tired, the ambition of middle age. It may well be that we as a people are slipping into the soberer years. It's high time. But who likes to find the first gray hair?

We first notice this preference for safety in Dirk Conway, the maturing bank messenger who wouldn't dream of peering out from the cyclone shelter of his weekly pay envelope. We think at the time this is an isolated instance, but we encounter it again and again.

We note that in cases where young men just out of high school or college have a job with a new firm, where the future is hazardous and recognition faster, or with an old-established institution where the future is as sure as progress is slow, they rarely hesitate; they vote for prudence.

They've been hearing and seeing too much of the calamities that might result from gambling. Their friends and parents advise them: "Take anything. And stick to it." So they do.

Occupations which depend on commissions aren't so attrac-

tive as they used to be. Brokerage houses, real estate and other sales enterprises do not enjoy the popularity of the past.

Boys and girls don't even like to take chances within the limits of their own jobs. Here is an instance, extreme, but not too unlike others :

James Borden was a clever, reliable young man. He worked his way through Knox College. Recommended by two of its esteemed employees, he came to the attention of the personnel officer of a great manufacturer of machinery in Chicago.

James got a job as office boy at fifty-five dollars a month. He was delighted to have it, because this firm is conscientious in placing young men where they will have an opportunity to demonstrate their qualities. Its foremen and department heads are charged especially to keep watchful eyes on promising juniors.

Now James actually had no ambition to succeed in this industry. He didn't want to make machinery; he wanted to be a doctor, and he was unable to finance his medical course after he secured his A.B. So he spent every evening reading medical books, or working in a laboratory. He ate, drank, and slept medicine.

But he never neglected his daily job. He was quick and intelligent. He learned quickly; too quickly. Consequently after three months, he was offered a chance to take a clerical job in a small downstate town, where the company operates a coal mine. The personnel director, a human and sympathetic individual, who knew of his ambitions and applauded them, advised against it.

"Don't take it," he urged. "You'll be buried down there. The little extra money that you will earn won't be enough to save toward a medical course, and the town offers no facilities for any study at all. Wait. Wait here and I'll get you a

job in one of our steel mills presently, timed so that you can work evenings and go to school in the daytime.”

But James was afraid not to take the job that offered the greater wage. He was afraid he might never have another chance. He was courageous in going through school, but his valor failed him here. He is still at the mine and will probably stay there.

Fear haunts this generation. It is making old people out of young ones. It cramps their souls.

Boys and girls with jobs are afraid of ideas that might get them into disfavor.

In one city we find girls employed by the telephone company afraid to make use of the Y.W.C.A. because some of its executives have been labelled “radical.”

They are afraid of joining unions, for fear it might cost them their jobs.

They are afraid of the political situation, afraid to have any positive opinions in any quarters where it might militate against them.

They are afraid of change.

Here's Mary Lee Milton, a gay little Birmingham girl who has a job in the New York office of the casting director of a big moving-picture company. We encounter Mary Lee in the elevator. She is talking it over with a friend.

“Oh, honey, how I'd like to go to Hollywood,” she's saying.

She has caught the attention of some of the higher-ups. We learn about it because one of the higher-ups is an old friend of ours.

“I'd like to go so bad I can taste it,” she drawls wistfully. “I'd like to see sunshine every day, and Grauman's Chinese Theater, and movie stars bein' dumbbells together.”

Did she ever go? we ask later. No, she didn't. She knew

the Hollywood office was inclined to be temperamental. She was sure of her job in her noisome cubicle under the Sixth Avenue elevated. She was afraid to chance California.

Did she have relatives to support? A young sister to put through college? An invalid mother? Nothing of the sort. Her father is a doctor, and well-to-do. This girl is just afraid of change, of chance.

This accounts in part for a growing interest in government service.

At first we are deceived. We think the increased attention and requests for government jobs among this generation is an indication of a growing regard for government, of a late-flowering instinct for public service. Not at all.

The government, whether municipal, state, or federal, is looked on as a last resort, or a way to gain experience. This is especially true of the attitude of young men toward positions in the New Deal agencies. They think the New Deal is temporary, and the jobs there are attractive as stop-gaps, but no more objectives than filling stations. Or else they look upon them as excellent ways to make contacts which will lead to something better, for they usually prefer jobs in private industry to posts in the government. This does not always hold, of course. The TVA is populated with young men who consider Heaven could be nothing more than a continuation of their present occupation.

Washington's marble halls are still thick with boys and girls who reflect the wide-eyed idealism of their chiefs. Never in our own lives have we seen Washington so over-run with honest and sincere men and women.

But on the whole this desire for something safe, something that makes the future a straight clear road, no matter how rough and narrow, has heightened respect for government

jobs. Not political appointments but the old Civil Service which was once scorned as a sinecure for the soft. Rarely, all in all, can we find that they look to their government because they have something to contribute, but merely because it appears stable; something that won't go bankrupt, or be subject to the vicissitudes of social or economic storms.

This is true in the East, and it is even true in the West. The University of New Mexico's President Zimmerman confesses it for his students.

"Boys and girls in this school see public service as a career because they're thinking more in terms of permanence than money-making or even adventure," he observes. "This reflects a basic change in our people out here. We're so close to the frontier. Only ten or fifteen years ago this was a ranch and cattle country of unplumbed potentialities. Now they believe it is no longer a reservoir of natural resources. They don't see any new roads to explore. They want jobs they can count on."

Well, this may work to the benefit of our public service. We don't know yet whether boys and girls settled early in a rut are an asset or not. But on the whole, we feel it's rather sad.

We would rather see our young people surge down the road to romance, though we may know it leads to nothing more than disillusion and humdrum. At least they've followed a vision a little way. Something goes out of America when youth sacrifices splendor to safety.

## Chapter Ten

### WHAT THIS GENERATION WANTS

WE ARE constantly startled as we travel by the difference between this generation and ours at their age. They are earnest, but weren't we?

We were so solemn in discovering and asserting our rights.

There was that question of freedom. Oh dear, oh dear! Freedom was a *very* important matter to us.

For instance, there was freedom from duty and obligation to our parents. We discovered Samuel Butler. Brandishing the *Way of All Flesh*—almost twenty years after it was first published!—we confronted the family with the accusation that we didn't ask to be born, and why should we be grateful? It was usually disconcerting the way they were able to retain their poise in the face of this charge. They were about as agitated, we recall, as a glass of tepid milk.

There was that burning issue: should girls smoke? It is my definite recollection that we first took unto us the filthy weed, learned to enjoy it, and then courageously argued our divine right to line our lungs and tint our fingers and our teeth with nicotine.

Among ourselves we had pretty serious problems. With girls there was the question of whether we should kiss a man before we were engaged to him. We all did, of course, but under no circumstances would we admit it.

There were other issues: should a man or a woman Confess



All to his mate-to-be, or was it best to lock the skeleton of the scarlet past in the closet and toss away the key?

Freedom was involved somehow in all of this. We wanted freedom to live by ourselves before we were married.

We had a great many theories about freedom within marriage. For instance, we women wanted the right to earn our own money and spend our own money without any questioning by our husbands.

Men wanted the right to go where they pleased, when they pleased, without any necessity for a domestic accounting.

If one party or the other to a marriage had an irresistible urge to infidelity, his or her individual freedom bestowed an inalienable right to indulge it. If our mates' hearts wandered with their impulses, then we must nobly give way to our successors, and no recriminations or nasty remarks, either. We were to feel it was beautiful while it lasted, and everything has to end!

Æsthetically we were an unlovely lot. Our ears were tuned to the horrible dissonances of jazz bands. Whining saxophones and banging brasses were more beautiful than Brahms. We cut our hair like boys and shortened our skirts until we were ridiculous. That was part of the revolt against the past, and freedom from convention. James Branch Cabell was our Bible and Henry L. Mencken our Book of Common Prayer.

We wanted freedom; we wanted Life with a large L, and were hell-bent on having it. And life was summed up in the Greenwich Village of Floyd Dell.

As we look back, it wasn't a very heroic period. We were palpitating with trivialities.

Those of us who weren't in deadly earnest about our personal self-expression were crusaders for a cause. Some of

us could raise our temperature to fever heat on the general subject of man's inhumanity to man. International cooperation was a shooting subject among us, so near were we to the fight on the League of Nations. Socialism was still the ultimate in radicalism, and George Bernard Shaw was its spokesman. Russia was a horror story, and we didn't discuss democracy; we had just made the world safe for it.

What a different picture today's children present!

After all, our raucous demand for freedom to think and act for ourselves was predicated on economic independence. We never doubted that we could find work. Youth was in demand. No matter how scanty our incomes were, we had them; they were our own; we earned them. So we thought we were exceedingly brave and clever when we went to live on them according to our own preferences. If we happened to forego our father's wholesale drygoods business for the adventure of art, or advertising, or engineering, we were valiant adventurers on uncharted seas, but always bolstered with the comforting knowledge that the wholesale drygoods business was there. We would struggle and starve rather than run up the white flag, but it made a difference.

How brittle, how unreal, we seem beside the boys and girls we meet everywhere, every way, today.

There are, naturally, some even now who are untouched by the times. When the family income adds into five or six figures, realities impinge but gently. Poverty and unemployment are apt to seem academic to boys and girls who never feel or see it. Each season reaps its crop of debutantes, with their concomitant luxuries. We are interested in the 1935-36 winter necessities because they seem so far and so strange after our rambling.

Mrs. Joseph Bryan III, in an article in the *Junior League*

*Magazine*, gives minimum requirements. They consist of "at least five party dresses, two dinner dresses, a couple of tea gowns or dinner pajamas, and an evening wrap. For the daytime the debutante needs three wool or wool jersey dresses, two silk dresses, one street-length velvet or velveteen dress, one tailored suit, and as many sweaters and skirts as she can buy. She needs three coats: one fur, a tweed, and a rather dressy wool. The debutante wears very little jewelry . . . a pearl necklace to the base of the throat if possible."

We are resentful when we read over these items, remembering the little barber's daughter who wanted "only one or two dresses, with the proper accessories," and the motherless girl in Memphis who is happy to transmute seventy-nine cents into her spring wardrobe, that another girl may have one too! But there are always such inequalities, at any time, and there aren't many debutantes.

Indeed, we frequently find the sons of the very rich so conscious of their friends' problems that they themselves are shy of the accoutrements of wealth. For instance, one undergraduate Du Pont drives an old Ford, and another young Du Pont makes out with a motorcycle at college. There isn't the uneasiness manifest in those who have less when they are with those who have more that there used to be. That's because, we decide, there isn't such a sense of inferiority. The numerical strength of the less fortunate has increased even in milieus where money was a standard of value. If anything, the very rich boy or girl is the awkward one.

That's only a rare symptom of the change, however.

Today's children don't yammer for self-expression.

To them, freedom is a word in the dictionary.

They are not young radicals re-making a faulty society, because the problem of making something of their own lives is a

Herculean task in the face of the difficulties they must surmount.

They either cannot earn their bread, or, for those a step up on the ladder of luck, there is nothing but a portion of dry bread.

So they are not concerned with abstractions. They are only dimly aware that they are a generation without faith, without tried standards.

They are terribly concerned with fundamentals. These fundamentals any one of them can list for us without hesitation: An education. A job. Marriage. And a little fun.

These are age-old requirements. Training for living. Work, a way of life, a means of preserving life. Marriage, as prime a need as the maintenance of life itself. It is axiomatic that self-preservation is the first law of nature, and that reproduction of the race is the second. And recreation, rest from work, follows naturally.

These needs have little to do with a civilization we like to regard as advanced. Primordial man, in his way, sought to satisfy them.

Thus the smug in spirit and the stuffed of stomach who like to orate with soap-box fluency, who like to tell the government and the people at large that they must "get back to basic principles" can watch a whole generation doing just that, if they will have the eyes to see.

We meet a good many such complacent souls as we journey through our country; and they are not always hard-boiled capitalists either. They are kind people who can't bear to pass a blind beggar with a tin cup and pencils and who would go to a lot of trouble to help the charwoman on the floor below the office because she has arthritis and a crippled son. But they

make flowery speeches about tightening belts, and cultivating a few of the qualities that made this country great.

Well, that's what these boys and girls are trying to do. They are not concerned with Communism or Fascism. They'd rather have democracy if they had their choice. But they don't think about it much.

They can't go out and grow their beans and potatoes, most of them, because you can't even cultivate cockleburrs in a big city.

A boy who has learned to be a bookkeeper as a rule can't do odd jobs of carpentering and fence-mending, because he has never had an opportunity to learn.

They are not bothered much with ideas; they are after all luxuries. They are faced with the first necessities of living.

As we move along, we'll keep this in mind. This generation wants education, work, marriage, and fun.

If they secure these things for themselves, they will not build much of a superstructure. The years will be passing.

## *Chapter Eleven*

### OPEN SESAME

EDUCATION IS THE cantrap that opens the gates to the Promised Land.

This generation feels sure of that. Though they see their brothers and sisters, their cousins and their friends, frame their sheepskins, and then apply their learning to the complicated business of mixing "lemon cokes"—selling shoes—taking movie tickets, increasing numbers of boys and girls want more and more education; their confidence in the magic of book-learning is undaunted. It's the answer to everything.

To secure it they make efforts so valiant that many a professorial heart must ache.

In the past there were always a certain number of students who worked their way through school. They were, however, in the extreme minority. Today, except in a few schools, mostly in the East, at least half of every institution's student body earns all or part of its expenses.

Before they even register, they write to inquire what they can do to earn money to stay in school.

Scholarships granted by the Federal Government are seductive as flies to trout, although they range only from \$12.50 to \$20 a month, depending upon the community in which the college is located. They are usually allotted on the basis of need.

The students benefiting will work at jobs created by the

faculty, in accordance with government regulations, and they will supplement this inadequate sum by any other means they can find.

Some of the more fortunate ones work only in the summer time, and contribute their earnings toward their winter's needs. Sometimes they work summer and winter.

We hear stories of heroic sacrifice and hardship.

Here's a girl at the University of Chicago. When Dean Works noticed her, she was red-eyed and sniffly. Her hair was drab and she was always rubbing her hands as if they were cold. They were. She was working for her schooling. She did three hours a day of typing for one of the faculty members. At night she had charge of the medical library for three or four hours. She tutored a child in a private family, for no more compensation than her room. It wasn't a whole room, either. Just a place to sleep: a couch in the living room. She carried a full program of studies. She was cold because, in Chicago's notoriously evil climate, she had shoes worn through and no rubbers at all.

Out in Laramie, Wyoming, the home of that state's university, we find a lad working in an all-night restaurant from eight at night until four in the morning.

We could fill pages and pages with stories of their effort and ingenuity. We find co-eds working as manicurists in their spare time. They sit at switchboards, do janitor and garden work, pressing and laundering. They've always washed dishes and waited table, and they haven't stopped now. They are nursemaids and domestic servants. They run elevators and act as gigolos in dance halls and set pins in bowling alleys. They even tend bar.

Down in an Indiana roadhouse we meet a slick-haired Northwestern University student interrupting a discussion

with some shabby friend on a philosophical problem too crude for us to understand to mix one of the most execrable cocktails we've ever tasted.

Athletes act as "bouncers" in restaurants, and we see the most famous sorority pins on girls who check our wraps at nightclubs.

Frequently their health suffers, badly. They often don't get enough to eat, and usually they do not spend enough time asleep. They frequently, we hear, eat only two meals a day, and sometimes only one.

At the University of Virginia, the registrar tells us that once a boy fainted on the campus. His brother was an athlete, a champion wrestler, and wrestling is one of the most popular sports at this institution. Investigation showed that the boys were working their way through their schooldays. The one boy simply denied himself too much, so that his spectacular brother might have enough nourishment to maintain his place on the wrestling team.

They display amazing ingenuity in their economies.

At this same school, in Charlottesville, three boys set up housekeeping in a cellar. The rent was a dollar a week. They cooked their meals and even kept chickens there.

At the University of California, this situation has given rise to a form of communism. We're somewhat reluctant to tell about it, because it may cause a major scandal, a legislative investigation, and goodness knows what upheavals.

The boys go in for communal housekeeping. The movement began way back in the dark days of February 1933. Two students who had about \$2.50 a week to spend for food decided that living would be cheaper if a group-purchasing plan could be devised.

So they found a woman who was a good cook, and whose



husband was hard hit by the depression. They struck a bargain whereby she agreed to market and cook for twenty boys at a flat rate of ten dollars a month each. In addition, each lad agreed to contribute three hours of labor a week, setting and clearing the tables, preparing vegetables, and washing dishes. Before the spring semester was over, sixty more undergraduates were clamoring for a chance to peel potatoes and scour skillets.

During the summer months, at the suggestion of a professor, many of these students joined self-help labor camps from which they received a salary in the form of credit slips to be exchanged for food at barter stores. With the assistance of the University Y.M.C.A. and the extremely competent Bureau of Occupations, a number of cash jobs were located. Moreover, about twenty students also organized their own labor camp in Clarksburg, California.

With the opening of the school in the autumn, these same students swarmed in with more ideas. They rented an empty fraternity house; borrowed some furniture from the Y.M.C.A., and bought some more with a loan of \$650 from the University Regents, who still smelled nothing of the acrid odor of Moscow. For a week, the sidewalk in front of the place was lined with rusty cots being painted and repaired. When the house was ready for occupancy, it was christened with the fancy name of Barrington Hall.

Board and room at Barrington Hall were offered at a rate as low as \$17 a month, with a maximum of \$22 for what corresponded to the royal suite. The only salaried employee in this mansion was the cook. All other posts, including the positions of dishwasher, kitchen-helper, housekeeper, etc., were filled by the students. Each man who lived here had to donate four hours of labor a week, and to take care of his

own room. If he didn't make the bed or wax the woodwork all year, it was his business. He had to live in it!

By the end of the year, the cooperative housekeeping movement was firmly entrenched on this campus. Although Barrington Hall accommodates sixty or seventy men, it wasn't enough. So in August of 1934, Sheridan Hall was opened. In order to care for this expansion, the students incorporated under the laws of the state, and hired a purchasing agent—on a part-time basis.

Unlike most fraternities, the only requirement for admission to these institutions is financial embarrassment. If a man has money enough to live elsewhere, he's blackballed.

Barrington Hall had to move in 1935. Move into a four-story apartment building with forty-eight two- and three-room apartments, which gives the luxury of a separate bath for every four or half-dozen men.

There is a lot of fun there. Ping-pong and chess tournaments. House dances. Teams in the intra-mural competitions. Inter-house activities with Sheridan Hall, exchange dinners, and so on.

Elsewhere too we find cooperative housekeeping, though it has rarely taken such competent form. We find young men make good housekeepers. They can plan, and budget and market. Sometimes they even go to household science departments, or actually sneak in on courses and learn to get nutritive diets that include whole wheat, the use of canned milk, and such economies most of them had never heard of. We think they'll make awfully difficult husbands!

All this takes a lot of time. When a student rises at six in the morning, works an hour or two waiting on table or washing dishes for his breakfast, does a few minutes' frantic skimming through books in preparation for his first class; spends

the morning at lectures or laboratory, earns his lunch as he did his breakfast, goes back to the classroom until it's time to work for dinner, and then crams in some hours on his "cash job," and finally scuttles back to the library or his room to prepare his lessons for the next day—well, he hasn't time for much else. Not a whole lot of time, anyhow. He does learn. A survey at Pennsylvania State College showed that students who had these government scholarships had a higher average scholastic grade than their fellows.

Still, this isn't all that college is for, is it?

How often have we heard it said that the contacts one makes, the extracurricular activities on the campus are as important, as essential a training for life as the facts one gleans from professors and books?

They are learning something we didn't, of course. They are learning perseverance, and ingenuity, and the value of labor. They are learning to appreciate what they get as we who were given all the opportunities of youth as a matter of course never did.

Thus we see the colleges turning out men with habits of hard work, of stamina, with appreciation for what they earn with their own efforts, and for the training provided by the curriculum.

They come out with a reputation for conscientiousness and integrity. The students who have the benefit of these small government scholarships don't regard their work as "busy work," as "boondoggling." This, no doubt, is largely because there is always plenty to do around any school, always things that need to be done for which there is no appropriation in the budget. At all events, the youngsters are interested and reliable. At the University of Chicago, for instance, hundreds of them had their money temporarily discontinued during a

period when all relief funds were stopped. The boys and girls went on with their work. They were making charts, surveys, working in the publicity office, and so on. They were either too interested or too sincere to walk out in the middle of a task.

Most universities have their own student-loan funds, also. Here likewise they indicate their honesty. The University of North Carolina, for example, has a student-loan fund which will lend a needy student from \$25 to \$200 a year at six per cent interest. It has not lost one per cent of its loans. This is not exceptional; it is average.

All this shows an inherent strength of character in this generation. It also develops it.

These student toilers are, however, often signally lacking in the qualities of personality which are as much a part of the requirements of many occupations as a degree. They are so busy earning their few dollars that they do not acquire that poise, that ability to meet with all sorts of people easily, the friendly camaraderie, and the social polish which is an asset no classroom can give.

This does not, we notice, apply so generally to girls as to young men. Girls imitate more. They are more conscious of their shortcomings. They suffer over their own clumsiness. They notice differences of dress and deportment. They change themselves.

At the University of Illinois we meet a most attractive young woman who has earned most of her schooling tutoring in an expensive camp in the summer time. She's the president of her chapter of a national sorority, a slender sun-tanned girl with bright brown hair brushed back into a knot low on her neck, and is somehow chic in the simplest of home-knitted beige sweaters, pleated beige skirt, and sturdy brogues.

"You should have seen Janet when she first came to Champagne," commented the "house-mother." "No sorority, big or little, even knew she was here. She teetered around in spike-heeled shoes, and clothes too gaudy for a burlesque queen. Her hair had a cast-iron marcel, and for earrings she wore chandeliers. Her make-up would have scandalized a street-walker!

"I happened to meet her because I sometimes go to chaperon freshmen parties, and I remember that I kept wondering why on earth such a cheap type of youngster ever thinks of going to college. Now look at her."

Well, Janet is the sort of girl we like to regard as typical of young American womanhood. We won't waste time worrying over her future. We don't have to be a crystal-gazer to predict a few successful years at a job, a nice husband, and a purposeful life in whatever town she lives in.

The young people themselves do not sit down and estimate and evaluate these intangibles, however.

We find at such places as the University of Nebraska boys from farm homes struggling for education that will take them away from the rigors of rural life. We find sons and daughters of plumbers and bricklayers scrubbing floors and cleaning laboratories, typing papers and airing children, so that they may enter white-collar careers. We find school teachers coming back to learn more, so they may logically hope for better public-school, and even private-school posts.

All of them are fired with the conviction that college leaves an imprint not only essential to success, but also the Open Sesame to the door of opportunity.

We also meet another sort of student much rarer in the past: this is the boy or girl who keeps on going to college because the longer he remains within those cloistered walls,

the longer he puts off the day when he has to face the actual business of living. Not all of these are poor of pocket, either. Bud Gibson is one of these.

Bud is in his first year of medical college at Harvard. We like Bud the instant he enters the room. We're sure he never went out for any letter, and has always been content to slide along with a grade of C. He enjoys sitting around with the fellows swapping ribald stories, though bull sessions about the New Deal bore him. But he'd give a friend his last cent or his last breath. A moon-faced extravert who will grow globular with the years; his untidy sweater and his unpressed tweeds have an opulent look.

Bud is the son of a marine engineer who has plenty of money but no business to give his son. So the future isn't all beer and skittles.

"I looked around for a job last summer," he tells us as we slide into conversation in a campus bookshop. "I couldn't find a thing to do. Nobody would take me seriously. Or else they were giving their jobs to fellows who needed the money more. That's all right, all right.

"I started to college thinking I'd be a doctor. Then I sort of got over that. I decided I'd rather go into business. I've got a girl over in Springfield.

"Then when I got my diploma I couldn't get anything to do. So the bug kind of bit me again. I guess I'll be a doctor after all."

Naturally there are still a majority of boys and girls in college for the same reasons that we went to college: for the love of learning; or for the fun they'll have; or because the family expects it of them; or simply because it's the thing to do.

At all events, they keep on swelling the enrollments, par-

ticularly in the great state universities and land-grant colleges, where the student body is unlimited in size. In the fall of 1935 alone, a survey of forty-four of these institutions showed an increase of 8.3 per cent enrollment over 1934, according to Dr. A. H. Upham, president of Miami University at Oxford, Ohio. Dr. Upham is secretary of the National Association of State Universities. The reporting institutions, representing all but four of the states having state or land-grant institutions of higher learning, showed an enrollment of 175,898 in October 1935 as compared with 162,406 in 1934.

The largest percentage of this gain was in the Pacific Coast states, where the increase reached ten per cent, with the mid-Western states running a close second. The slimmest gains were in the New England states.

This avid thirst for education does not characterize this whole generation, of course. The boys and girls who don't like school and who won't go to school are still numerous.

We find youngsters who leave school because they aren't interested and their parents do not insist that they continue. Others leave because they don't like their teachers. Still others put an early period to their schooldays because they hope to find work, or because of illness. This is as it has always been.

We find more young people out of school today because their parents cannot afford it than we did in the past, however; from families where one son or daughter less in school means less of a strain on the family pocketbook. We find them at home because they have no money for clothes or for books. We encounter all too often children sitting on the front porch or on the curbstone because the nearest high school is not within walking distance and there isn't carfare in the house.

Nevertheless there are more students in high schools today

than ever before. In New York state alone, attendance has been 195 per cent since 1920. In the country as a whole, the number of boys and girls in high schools has grown from almost four and a half millions in 1929 to nearly six millions in 1935—an increase of 34.1 per cent, according to estimates by the National Education Association.

Whether valid or not, from the little red schoolhouse to the ivied towers of stately universities, our youth looks on learning as the tools of life, and as a promise.



## *Chapter Twelve*

### JOB HUNTERS

ONE DAY Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt received a letter.

"I am looking for a job," it stated, "and in thinking of the people to whom I might apply, my mind happened to fall on you."

Thus one young fellow went about the business of looking for work.

This is no more impracticable an effort than many boys and girls have made, we find. We are keenly interested in the manner in which young men and women of this generation hunt work, what they ask for, and what they are willing to take. So we inquire at every opportunity. We are eager to know how many of them have work, what they are doing, and how they found their jobs.

We are driving out of Chicago very early in the morning. It's a damp drizzly day. We pass through the stockyards district. It is buzzing with life, even at this hour. There are rotten old houses, with bits of yards, all unkempt and weed-choked. We see slatternly women idling in their windows, or yelling at children out already in their natural playground, the cracked and cluttered city streets. Children playing "gangster," shooting craps, playing cards. Somebody's radio is singing "Mother Macree." We toot our way uncomfortably, breathing air vile with the dead-animal smell that always hovers over Packingtown and which is sometimes blown over

into the shining windows of comfortable homes over by the lake when the wind is from the west.

As we pass Armour and Company's plant, we pause. Let us see what is going on at the employment office. We know it opens at six in the morning.

There are crowds of people here, and many of the boys look young. Here's a husky youngster of some south European stock. He has shabby clothes, and his hands are thrust into his pockets with the air of a man who never expects to find anything in them.

"What am I doing?" he repeats truculently. "Pickin' daisies, pickin' daisies, lady. What the hell do you s'pose I'm doin'? I been hangin' around here since five o'clock. And this ain't the first time, neither."

Over at the International Harvester Company's plant, there's a crowd at the gate. They want work, too.

How do they happen to be there? That's easy. One person in a neighborhood gets a job, and everybody in the block hears about it. The next morning there's a crowd of about five hundred men, women, and children at the gate. It's like that everywhere.

The most satisfactory way to get a job, apparently, is through the recommendation of friends or relatives.

In Pittsburgh, a minor executive of one of the big coal companies has a habit of getting a shave and a shine in the barber shop downstairs. One day the barber said:

"Mr. Angell, my daughter Jenny's fella is a fine boy. He's been to a good technical high school, and all the teachers said he ought to do fine. But he can't get a job. If you ever have an opening, how'd it be to talk with him, huh?"

That's how Jenny's beau got his chance. There are many cases like that.

Boys and girls get a chance to sell their talents because the foreman lives next door, or an uncle of one of the oldest employees runs the bowling alley in the neighborhood. Or because the janitor is an uncle of a job-hunting stenographer. This slight personal contact gives them at least an entree inside the plant.

Political organizations are a great help, too. A card from the police captain, or the ward boss, or the precinct leader will get a youngster at least a hearing.

No wonder they think it's not ability but "pull" that gets jobs.

A few read the want ads in the newspapers. We ask a busy little buttons running errands in a wholesale florist's how he found his niche.

"Aw, I read all the ads in the papers," he grinned. "I stole the *Tribune* from the honor box at our corner every morning first thing!"

Employment agencies are not well regarded by job-hunting young people. A study directed by Miss Anne Davis, under the auspices of the University of Chicago, shows this. Her survey was a house-to-house canvass of 3,242 adolescents sixteen to twenty years old, inclusive, in representative neighborhoods. Here's what she found about the way boys and girls got their jobs: 640 got their last employment through friends or relatives, 375 made personal application, 46 answered advertisements in the papers, and 16 obtained them through employment agencies.

Of the total number of boys and girls questioned, 2,680 had never been to the offices of any employment agency. Only 268 had tried the state re-employment offices, and 205 had applied to commercial agencies.

Her reports, too, indicate that the youngsters are cynical

about any but personal contact or connections made through friends. "Answering ads is a waste of time and carfare, and most of them are fakes anyhow," they were likely to say.

"Commercial agencies take your money and give you the run-around," is their opinion. And "Free agencies don't do any good."

Truly, the amount of shoe-leather these youngsters spend in their job-hunting is pathetic. They trudge from factory to factory, from shop to mill. They wait and hope, go home sick at heart, and rally their courage and their optimism to march out again, until they get too tired to try any more.

As a matter of fact, the boys and girls who do try the agencies are those with the best education and equipment. Most of these have found some sort of work, some time, whether it has been merely a paper route, or a job wrapping roasts in a butcher shop on Saturdays.

Some youngsters, in trying to find work, show remarkable ingenuity. We sit in a New York vocational guidance and employment office one morning when a boy comes to find how he can learn deep-sea diving. We chuckled at first, until we heard that there actually are more jobs to be had at salvaging than there are men able to work at them.

This job-hunting business is a dreary occupation, as any of us who have ever sought work know well. We are keenly sympathetic when we meet boys so anxious they are incoherent, and girls so frightened they burst into tears if anyone speaks kindly to them.

After they've been job-hunting for a couple of years, they become apathetic and hopeless. They lose their ambition. When Miss Anne Davis's investigators asked those who had never had work what sort they wanted, 770 said they would take anything. They had no special interests. This is

significant, because as a rule a youngster leaving school has *some* idea what he'd like to do, some ambition in work. Moreover, 184 of them said quite frankly that they didn't want anything at all. Idleness had completely killed their desire for labor.

A good many, of course, had ideas. They would like an opportunity at trade, at factory work, and many brightened at the mention of electrical occupations. It's remarkable how little desire they displayed, even in imagination, for the romantic professions, such as aviation or the radio.

This comes a little farther up the social scale. We ourselves encounter numbers of boys and girls who have woefully unreal hopes in these directions.

Phil Haddock is one of them. We meet Phil at Trail's End Auto Camp. The play on words, we're sure, is unconscious. It's a trailer camp, and one of the most depressing manifestations of American character we find.

Trail's End is on a vacant lot in a California city. It covers an area 300 by 400 feet and faces a public beach. The sun, setting golden in an aquamarine and rose-quartz sky, colors 149 automobiles, with trailers or tents beside them. The trailers are often labelled with such subtle humor as "Stagger Inn," and the tents are anything from the latest 1934 model to contraptions made of feed sacks. We see cots either in the open or lined up side by side with institutional lack of privacy.

"Don't you sort of hate that?" we ask Phil, who is strumming a guitar and exercising a tenor voice, pleasant but no more individual than a ten-cent toothbrush.

"Oh, camping's camping," he explains. "It gives me a chance to practice and to try out numbers on an average audience."

It is average enough, goodness knows. Certainly it is

unimaginative. With all the West to pitch their tents in, 149 families are staying here months at a time: families from diaper to doddering age. Their wash hangs on the lines; their dogs scratch; their children whoop; their men-folks shave; sometimes their chickens escape their coops.

Phil likes it. He's a radio artist, he informs us. He hasn't had a chance to face the microphone yet, but he's practicing up. He's absolutely certain he's a better Bing Crosby. His pa's a dairy farmer over in Arizona, and it's hot there this time of the year. So he has persuaded Pa to let him come here, with Ma and little Bobby and sister Ada to spend the summer. It costs five dollars a month to stay here; seven with electricity. You get general toilet facilities for that outlay. You cook on an oil stove and you don't need many clothes.

Phil is earnest, very earnest. He practices all day long.

"I've got a talent," he says, convinced. "There's real money in the radio. Pa thinks I ought to stay and work on the farm, but Ma takes up for me. You wait, lady. Write me a letter when I'm on the air. Fan mail helps a lot. Even Paul Whiteman likes to get 'em."

Some boys and girls, like Phil, wait persistently for what they want. Others, most of the others, eagerly take anything. We've been meeting these young people constantly ever since we started.

Those who have had training in forestry service and other technical branches of work needed in the government's new emergency agencies, bombard the Washington and state offices with applications for work. They don't sit and wait for the government to find them.

There is a definite increase in applications in work that wasn't popular a few years ago, because there wasn't much money in it. The stock and bond business is enjoying a run

of remarkable disfavor in this generation, and there is an emotional interest in social service. We easily understand that.

Girls, on the whole, have an easier time. In the first place, they do not hope for, or feel that they need as much in their pay envelopes as young men. Then, too, they do not have the tradition in work that men have. There is no pattern defined through the years. They are not surprised that things are hard. Women had to battle prejudice, even in the halcyon 1920's; they have to battle for opportunity today. It's still a struggle, but they are used to it.

Moreover, they are more versatile. They have not, as often, the technical training of men.

But men, too, are willing and glad to take anything they can get. When they are graduates of good vocational schools or of colleges and universities, they enroll in their placement offices. They're never fussy. They do not demand that an employer shall appreciate their training or capacities. They just want to get on the pay roll, trusting in chance to show later the stuff they're made of.

They grab at any pay. "A hundred dollars a month looks like heaven to me," sighed a lad clerking in a steamship office.

College graduates of some great institutions have been averaging twenty dollars a week, and thankful for it, we hear. Seventy dollars a month is not unusual, and a good many are still working for ten and fifteen dollars a week.

Those who are occupied at something—anything—aren't without hope. Like Grant we eavesdrop unwittingly one night on a conversation between our hostess and her boy during a week-end in a small Mississippi town. Grant is in the fire department, and looking for something more suitable.

"What's happened to that surveying job over in Meridien?" she inquires.

"Nothing doing." The boy's voice is toneless.

"It seems to me," she goes on, "that you could get something besides sitting over at the firehouse polishing up brass all day. After all the money your dad spent on you."

"Oh, now, Ma," the lad is cajoling, "don't you worry. Luck's gotta turn some time. It ain't reasonable. It just *has* to."



## Chapter Thirteen

### TIME ON THEIR HANDS

#### TWENTY MILLION BOYS AND GIRLS IN THE UNITED STATES USE DOPE

SUPPOSE YOU READ that in the morning paper? Not in one of the screaming tabloids, but in the respectable *New York Times*, or the discreet *Kansas City Star*?

You'd be scandalized. Terrified. You'd say what is the country coming to? You'd say there ought to be a law. . . . But under no circumstances would you imagine that your own Judy and John were included in those twenty million.

Well, we're as sure as you are that your Judy and John are clean, wholesome, healthy young people. But we are also absolutely certain that they use as much of this decade's drug as they can have.

We are not talking of any opium derivative. We are referring to the movies.

We are not in any way censuring or criticizing the movies. We think the moving pictures are getting better and better.

We're not berating or condemning the young people, either. We are stating our own observations—reporting a condition the same in Pittsburgh, California as in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

We see that the movies are becoming as essential to today's children as cocaine to an addict. And in part, for the same reasons:

Life is empty; they lose themselves in a glamorous world where marvellous things happen.

Life is boring; the make-believe world is tremendously exciting.

Their tomorrows are like their yesterdays and todays; they run away from them in a gripping dream of adventure and romance.

Their lives are without color; in the movie palace, they have the whole spectrum.

They travel to far places and backward into history, effortless as an opium smoker.

They identify themselves with Hollywood heroines. They love and anguish and struggle and succeed vicariously.

When they can't go to the movies, they listen to the radio.

They sit at home and get all the excitement of a football game—at third hand. They shave to the latest sentimental song. They giggle at the jokes of comedians, good or bad. They find their laughter by a twist of a dial.

This whole generation is living passively, vicariously. It is finding its fun in unreality. The movies and the radio are insidious drugs, bottled, we thought, harmlessly, under as careful directions as public opinion can control. The campaign for "decency" has brought us superb cinemas. The fact of the Federal radio control is so omnipresent a brake that it caused the ethereal powers, we remember, to silence a distinguished physician for calling syphilis just that in a scientific lecture on the air waves. Altogether we were inclined to sit back with the comforting belief that we had protected our young people.

The movies are innocuous enough, goodness knows. They do not present labor struggles. They do not picture starvation and suffering and death. They neither glorify the gang-

ster any more, nor do they exhibit the filth and the fear and the dinginess of the criminal career. They do not, at present, romanticize immorality, but neither do they show its shallow tawdriness.

They are nothing more nor less than an anodyne for the bleak today. Pay a dime or a quarter and buy a ready-made Elysium.

On our travels, we hear more discussion about the movies and their stars than about any other thing. We pause in a drug store for a midafternoon orange juice in McLean, Texas. Three boys and a pretty girl have retreated from the blistering sun into this cool sanctuary. They are leaning across the soda counter talking to the boy in charge, and all giggling and gossiping over a current issue of a movie magazine spread between them.

We hear a group of CCC lads, resting in the shadow of their truck up in the Great Smokies, arguing good-naturedly about the relative appeal of Ann Harding and Joan Crawford.

We discuss Clarke Gable and Gary Cooper with two girls who come and join us in a shabby tourist camp in Checotah, Oklahoma, where we're be-muddled for the night.

We're the center of attention when we visit one night at an Oyster Bay estate because we've been to Hollywood and actually encountered Jean Harlow up at Arrowhead Lake, and grasped her hand.

This generation is a curious successor to ours. It isn't excitement-mad as we were. We at least wanted to live feverishly ourselves. Too many of these youngsters let the movie stars do their thrilling for them.

This holds right through every section of the country, and cuts across every social stratum.

We observe with considerable interest that Society with a large S isn't the model for the average girl any more. The belle of Main Street doesn't comb her hair and remodel her frocks and her manners in her notion of the Vanderbilt and Whitney mode. She watches the coiffure and the costumes of the Norma Shearers and Constance Bennetts, and goes home to see how well she can imitate them. As a matter of fact, Park Avenue and Four Corners look just about alike. The girls on both thoroughfares get their ideas and their patterns from the same animated models!

We confess this makes American girls quite attractive, though they're all exactly alike. Most of them are well dressed. If they can't buy cheap copies of Fifth Avenue frocks, they make them themselves. They watch the cinema fashions, and rush right home. We saw a fashion show given by the misses of a 4-H Club in Kansas, and thought the gowns rivalled anything we'd seen. They keep their hair brushed and bright, according to the advice these heroines give out in the newspapers, and then they do it up in the latest fashion of the latest screen favorite.

We couldn't help noting this phenomenon if we'd been crawling over the country on our hands and knees, eyes concentrated on the ground in a tense hunt for signs of an invasion of the spotted salamander.

As a matter of fact, we are eager to learn how our young people employ their leisure.

What we hear and see is illuminating. Among the comfortable, sports are popular. In the summer time, there's swimming and golf and tennis. It's smart to be healthy. With girls, it's becoming a fetish. Debutantes don't sleep till noon nowadays; they get up and into tennis togs or bathing suits.

Their taste in music is vastly improved. School victrolas

have records of "Carmen," and "Lieberstraum," and "In the Vienna Woods." Lighter opera, such as "Rigoletto," has a certain vogue. Operettas with good music are distinctly popular. Glee clubs give an indication of interest. The clubs that used to be famous for their renditions of barroom ballads are practicing Gregorian chants.

We don't take this, however, as any rush to culture. We never hear any serious discussion of music, except among students of it. Nor is there any discernible renascence of interest in good literature. The demand is for the same character of stories as the young people see animated on the screen. In this they do not differ from us. We preferred cheap and easy reading. They do, too.

No, active amusement takes the form of cocktail parties, and automobile riding, and dancing. The atmosphere isn't as hectic as in our day, but the entertainment is about the same. We are likely to get ripe olives and carrot curls instead of caviar and hearts of artichoke with our dry martinis nowadays. Dancing isn't so vulgar, but it's just as intense. That's all.

There are still more youngsters watching football and baseball, discussing tennis and hockey than there are lads and lassies active in them.

This is all very well for the young men and women who have work to fill the major portion of their time. But what about those millions to whom leisure is not a blessing, because it's enforced?

We keep remembering Plutarch's report: "Dionysius the Elder, being asked whether he was at leisure, he replied, 'God forbid that it should ever befall me.'" That's how most of us feel when the hope of our old age becomes the tragedy of our youth.

We asked Ben Crawford, that lad in Union, South Carolina, who was thankful he had a home to stay in, what he and his idle friends did with their time. "Oh," he responded vaguely, "play around."

We ask a good many boys and girls that question, and elicit the identical answer.

We've never taught our sons and daughters to do anything but work. We've never inculcated the idea that it's good to have an avocation; whether it's collecting pre-repeal whiskey bottles or playing the harmonica, or painting landscapes or the furniture. They don't know how to *do* anything. They have to have their fun given to them. They cannot make it themselves.

We hope this desire for security may be buttressed by an interest in some hobby, whether cultural or merely entertaining, as we find so often in older nations. But as yet we see no portent of such a development as we travel.

Certainly this lack of any secondary interests is a calamity to the boys and girls upon whose heads leisure has fallen.

This is disheartening in homes where poverty does not accent emptiness. But come to the city sections where funds for fun are scarce as terrapin for lunch.

Here's just an average city block. The one we're seeing is in Minneapolis, but it might be in Cleveland or Newark or Boston. Here are boys in their teens and early twenties sitting on curbstones, on doorsteps, on running boards of automobiles. They sit around by the hour. They've walked out of their homes as soon as they've finished their breakfasts, and they won't go back until they're hungry again. In these homes, there isn't always a family dinner, we know. The parents and children get what they can when it's ready, and they want it. Here's an evil-smelling segment of a building.

You can buy dubious hamburgers for a nickel, and a glass of beer for a dime. There are young men sitting at a couple of fly-specked tables, chipped and soiled. They are playing cards. Down the street a way is a poolroom. It's only eleven in the morning, so there are no cash customers; just three boys hanging around.

A couple of lads are playing baseball in the street. It makes us nervous, and we honk at them irritably. A few others are pitching horseshoes in a vacant lot. We think that empty plot of ground could easily be cleared and used for a gridiron, and a baseball diamond. Couldn't the city afford a couple of tennis courts?

Some boys we know are puttering around the house, probably driving their mothers and sisters half-crazy. Their sisters aren't on the streets. They are helping with the housework, listening to the radio, or visiting with one another, and wishing they had jobs. But jobs at the factory, or in beauty parlors. We rarely find girls who want to earn their living doing housework. Domestic service is not popular in this country.

Some of the boys and girls are in a corner of the house reading. What? Cheap magazines as a rule. The ones we see are *Western Stories*, *War Aces*, *Love Story*, *True Story*, *Movie*, and *Detective* magazines. Only occasionally do we see such publications as *Popular Mechanics* or *Popular Science*.

The figures we gleaned from Miss Anne Davis's study in Chicago would apply here, and anywhere. We quote them herewith. They are significant:

Her investigators asked how many spent any time at all in the public libraries. They found that 383 spent some time there, and 2,841 never went inside of one.

Chicago is magnificently equipped with parks and park

houses. But while 1,118 visited them some time, 2,110 never found them attractive for an hour.

The Windy City boasts the most superb beaches outside of California. Yet only 536 boys and girls frequented them; 2,687 didn't.

The supervised clubrooms apparently are even less seductive, for 277 spent some time in them; and 2,930 spent none there.

The tabulation of attendance in Chicago's famous settlement houses is even more distressing. Only sixty boys and girls found anything to lure them there, whereas 3,163 had never been near them. At least, not since they've grown up.

This holds for the Y.W.C.A., the Y.M.C.A., and the Jewish People's Institute, too. Forty-five said they spent some time in these institutions, and 3,171 said they didn't.

The figures on the library books read is a pretty sad commentary. For 2,961 boys and girls said they hadn't read any; 136 said they had read one; 79 had read two; 36 had plowed through three; 9 had read four; and one person was discovered who had read five or more.

They claim they don't go to dance halls or poolrooms much either. But of course that takes money. Girls who go to dance halls or the movies sometimes said freely that they got their spending money from "boy friends."

What, then, do they do? They told the investigators. "Just fool around."

Well, boys and girls may fool around the country club without becoming a liability to the taxpayers. But these youngsters, with no place to go outside their unlovely homes or the city streets are bound to get into trouble.

And they do.

We hear, in one town and another, that there has been a



decrease in juvenile delinquency during the depression. We also learn that juvenile court funds have been reduced. There aren't the facilities for taking care of young delinquents; it's easier, and cheaper, to reprimand them, or overlook their errors, and call it a day!

As a matter of fact, we even hear of the children of the so-called upper classes getting into trouble. Forty youngsters in South Pasadena, California, went on an all-night party, broke into a cabin, and said, "Let's give it the works." So they did. They wrecked it from top to bottom, broke chairs, smashed pictures, dishes, dressers—demolished everything in the place, achieving a total of \$1,500 damages. These were the sons of well-to-do families, not boys from the back streets and slums.

This breaking into empty houses and destroying their contents is a curious development of the past five years. We hear, while we are in Los Angeles, of the "Ace of Spades Gang," composed, in part, of boys from the opulent Beverley Hills and Wiltshire districts. They liked to sneak into an empty house, tear out the chandeliers, upset ice-boxes, and generally wreak havoc.

This isn't confined to California, by any means. We hear of a high school in Charlotte, North Carolina, where the boys broke every light bulb in the building; and of a school in Kannapolis, where the students did several thousands of dollars' worth of damage.

But all they get from these expeditions is a peculiar variety of excitement. With boys and girls over the tracks, it's different. The lads commit crimes because they need money.

They steal ties from the railroad tracks because they have no fuel at home. They steal clothes because they have nothing to wear.

Remember that lad we saw hoping for work outside the

doors of the Armour plant, in Chicago's Packingtown? We heard about him from the policeman on the beat.

His ambition is to be an orchestra leader, though he'd be contented if he could find an honest job in the stockyards. As it is, he spends his nights working as a waiter in a saloon. When a man gets drunk, this boy slips him a doped drink. Then the proprietor "rolls" the unconscious customer. The boy himself gets up in the morning and stands in line trying to get a regular job!

Our policeman friend is informative. He points out a shop with advertisements for automobile parts painted on its window in big white scrawly letters. We think the prices are exceptionally cheap. No wonder! This store, according to the officer of the law, buys stolen parts. The owner encourages the boys in the neighborhood to strip automobiles. He buys what they bring in. Stripping cars is the main occupation of the unemployed boys in this section.

Boys steal for money. Girls steal for adornment. We looked into the drawer of a probation officer in the Denver juvenile court, and saw a collection of articles recovered from young girls. Ten-cent bracelets were piled up, mixed with make-up, cigarette cases, nail polish, and all sorts of cheap jewelry.

We cannot forget a couple of these girls we see in New York, sitting waiting with the policewoman. Nellie and Kathleen are two little Irish maidens, shamed and scared. They've been arrested for shoplifting. Stealing cosmetics in Woolworth's. Here are their stories:

Nellie's mother had brought her from the Old Country when she was about twelve. But the daughter of Erin, fleeing from a drunken husband to the storied opportunity of America, died before the pair reached Ellis Island. Nellie's aunt took her to her tenement home, made her one of her brawling

family. Soon auntie, too, went to her reward. The family somehow scattered. Nellie went looking for work.

She got a job, finally, in a candy factory. The theory was that after you learned the work, you got sixteen dollars a week wages. But apparently it took a long long time to learn. Nellie has been working for a year and a half; she is still only paid for three days a week because the other three are charged to her "education."

Now eight dollars for food, room, clothes, recreation, and so on, isn't exactly lavish. But Kathleen, whom she met at church, told her it was more than she had. Kathleen is a servant girl. For a family of husband and wife, three children, and a crotchety old father, she washes and irons, cleans and mends, cooks, polishes silver, waits on table. All for the privilege of sleeping in an airless closet of a room and getting her three meals a day. And she ought to be thankful, she hears quite often, to have such a good home, what with the depression and girls like her having to walk the streets!

Kathleen never had any folks. She'd been turned out of an orphanage when she was old enough. All she knew was cooking and sweeping and scrubbing. She'll never polish Park Avenue crystal; we're sure of that. But she is hard-working and willing and, yes, honest.

Still, when the grocery boy told her he and his pal would like to take her and her girl friend to a dance on Saturday night, the glamour in those scented colored boxes was too much for them both. And so. . . .

Sometimes these boys and girls get tired of this futile life. Then the more adventurous among them take to the road, volunteers in the army of transients roaming the highways and railroad right-of-ways over this country.

A great deal has been written and said about these young

vagabonds. They've been romanticized as bands of American gypsies answering the call of adventure. They've been damned, as I heard the Governor of Arizona, Clyde Tingley refer to them, as "criminals and bums, who ought to be in jail, every one of them."

They are neither. They are mostly like Solly Levin whom we met in New Mexico: lads who couldn't find a job at home, and who felt they were an unwelcome burden to their families. So they started out to find work elsewhere. They hitch-hike, when they can. They ride the freights, to the futile fury of the railroads, often ruining perishable consignments. They try to find work in one town after another, and finally give up. They're tired. They live from day to day.

On our journey through the land, we ourselves stay at good hotels or in comfortable tourist camps. Sometimes we luxuriate in a night or two with friends. And after a while we feel dusty; that the travel-stain has worn into our very beings. We see no farther than today. Yet we have clean linen, good food, good beds, a bath each evening, and money in our pockets. Still we are road-weary and even bored. We cannot fail to compare our lot with these young wanderers.

No, they're not romantic figures. They're not sinister either. Some of them get into trouble: steal automobiles or whatever they see. But most of them are simply moving on. They have a wanderlust, a discontent, that partakes of nothing divine. It becomes a dreary, restless habit.

They have a fine contempt for the social workers they meet, and tell them marvellous lies, particularly about themselves. One youngster, obviously of Anglo-Saxon origin, came into a California camp and with a wicked light in his eyes, signed himself "John Pietraskiewiez."

But after all, what's in a name? "John Pietraskiewicz" will be moving on in a few days.

That's the only way he differs from his friends at home, wherever that may be. He's moving on. They're "fooling around."

## *Chapter Fourteen*

### ESCAPE

"COME TO A BEEFSTEAK FRY," invited a junior in a big Denver law firm. "Just my own gang. You'll have a good time and get out of this heat."

A beefsteak fry on the top of a Rocky mountain! Wonderful!

Our new friend and his pretty wife wait in their car while we change into flat heels and grab sweaters. Sweetly serious young people they are. He is earnest and slightly bowed; she is brown and trim, and full of a detailed report of a championship golf match she'd been following all day at the country club.

We join the rest of the party at the home of one couple. We're the only strangers. The rest have grown up together, gone to school together. Three couples are married, and hope the other pair will be. One chap has a good job with the telephone company; another is the nephew of a lumber man and happily settled with the firm. The third is already assistant manager of a paint business, and the one bachelor, a big, unspoiled magazine-advertisement lad, has a good job with a well-established publicity house. None of the girls has ever worked, or wanted to. Heart-warming, average young Americans! The sort we like to think of as usual and representative; stable and secure.

The home in which we gather is a trim little house, sitting

like a snug white hen among the trees. It is agreeably furnished, and equipped with every device for comfort and convenience.

Our hostess, a bride of ten months, a gay creature with her curls tied back with a blue ribbon, is mixing cocktails. Quite a few cocktails. When they're all gone, we pack our knobbly bundles into two big cars and start up the mountain. Up and up a smooth narrow road that has hairpin turns, switchbacks, and beauty beyond our powers of description.

Finally we reach the top, and build a great fire. Tall pine trees seem to touch the nearer stars. Below, Denver glitters like an open jewelbox. A soaring fire in the darkness, the smell of frying steak, potatoes, and onions, boiling coffee. And friends. What more could one need?

One thing apparently: more cocktails.

We have them. We've no idea how many more. This we can vouch for: too many. The bride with the blue hair ribbon dances coyly about pulling out the men's shirt tails. This accomplished, she tumbles beside one of the cars and sleeps. Her husband chortles and covers her over fondly with a lap-robe.

Two pairs, not mates, disappear into the shadows, and return very late, in conspicuous disarray. The whole evening has a shoddy, New York speakeasy atmosphere.

As we teeter perilously down those canyons late at night, we keep wondering, "Why?"

We are frankly shocked. This is surprising because we ourselves belong to the hip-flask, bathtub-gin generation. When we were young, our drinking began as bravado, excitement in defying an unpopular law. In the metropolitan areas of the East, when it became commonplace to ignore the law just before repeal and easier to get good liquor, we drank a little

less. Nowadays we order our dinners around the wines we can obtain, and blacklist a drunken guest.

Perhaps we are becoming self-righteous since we're nearing the age of indigestion. Perhaps we've consumed our quota of alcohol, and recoil at people just imbibing theirs.

At all events, we see this generation drinking, and drinking heavily. We would think it was purely an escape mechanism, a drug like the movies, did we not observe it in such young men and women as those who drank on a mountain top.

This wasn't only one experience. We go to a picnic of high-school boys and girls near Wichita, in "Dry" Kansas, and see bootleg gin disappear in such quantities as to startle a Broadway bartender.

We're invited to a party one Sunday afternoon in Knoxville, in "Dry" Tennessee. "Corn" is not only the refreshment offered in unlimited quantity, but it is also the only subject of conversation.

We never count sexes, but we are sure we see girls drinking more heavily than boys. We're amused one day in New York when we see a young couple in a Park Avenue cocktail room. The girl is drinking a Scotch and soda. Her escort is imbibing milk.

In most of the hotels where there is dancing, we observe young people coming into the bars for drinks between dances.

In San Francisco, in both the fashionable St. Francis Hotel and the Palace Hotel are rooms marked "Ladies' Bar—Gentlemen admitted when accompanying ladies." This perhaps shows a more liberal spirit than in New York dispensaries, which are marked "Ladies' Bar," and nothing is said about gentlemen accompanying them!

We are not happy at the sight of drinking at sporting events. That is a development since our schooldays too.



We never had any rules about it. It wasn't usual; it wasn't done.

Coach Fielding Yost, of Michigan, and later Athletic Director George Huff of the University of Illinois, instituted crusades against drinking in their stadiums. Tickets are refused to people who have been celebrating enthusiastically before the game, and ushers are ordered to eject anyone who becomes obnoxious during the games. It helps.

That there is a great deal of drinking generally isn't only our own observation. The Federal Treasury announces that we're spending about seven cents out of every dollar of our income for alcohol. That's three and a half billions a year! Brewers and distillers announce happily that their business still tends to increase.

The Drys of course blame this on repeal. We doubt this, because we see just as much drinking in the still dry states as in the wide-open ones.

The answer to this is in part, no doubt, buried deep in psychology; in the spirits of men and women, and boys and girls so accustomed to meagre lives that they must drink for merriment—for hope—for release.

There are a good many ideas going around about this subject. The W.C.T.U., at its sixty-first annual convention, made plans to keep the younger generation out of saloons. One of its proposals for combatting the evils of the Demon Rum was to inculcate a taste for non-alcoholic beverages with fruit ingredients and naughty names. Among the new ones presented to a palpitating public are November Chill, made of cranberries; Huckleberry Grin, a concoction of huckleberry juice and soda; Harlemesque, something seductive made of crushed watermelon; and New England Blackberry Cup, composed of raspberries, blackberries, and mint. According to Mrs.

Blanche Pennington, chief of the W.C.T.U.'s department of non-alcoholic products, they "exhale romance whenever served."

Mrs. John S. Sheppard, the wise and penetrating member of New York State's Liquor Authority, however, reminds us that during prohibition, people forgot to consider alcohol in its relation to normal life. She is insisting on sane education which would really lead to temperance.

"Today," she notes, "although temperance education—so-called—is mandatory in the public schools in practically every state in the Union, with, I believe, only one exception, the teaching in many instances has been dictated by the Women's Christian Temperance Union and is not impartial, scientific, and based on sound fact, but is actually only propaganda for total abstinence.

"The Board of Regents in this state tried last year to have a bill passed making the education on the subject of alcohol conform to modern ideas. Today it is only given in New York in connection with physiology and hygiene. The modern approach to it is that the question of alcoholic beverages should be considered not only in relation to health and morals, but to every activity of the individual as a citizen of the state.

"The Board of Regents wanted also to leave to their discretion the decision as to the age when education on the subject of alcohol should be given, and not have it mandatory, as it now is, that such teaching be given in the lowest grades and to young children. It certainly seems morbid to stress to young children the evils due to overindulgence in alcohol. Many people feel that it reacts unfavorably on them and makes it impossible for them ever to have a sane approach to this question.

"On the whole the principal trouble in this country seems to me that the type of education given does not square with experience and observation. The ideal temperance education today, which is *temperance* education, is being given in Sweden, where it is part of the curriculum of all the schools in the Kingdom. The effect of alcohol is studied in relation to health, efficiency, economics, morals, crime, poverty, welfare, and politics. The evils are not overstressed, but are presented in a clear scientific way. There is no emotional appeal as there has always been in our so-called temperance education."

We heartily agree with Mrs. Sheppard when she adds that "This is the psychological time for attempting a real campaign for temperance education. A good many young people who drank heavily during Prohibition are now beginning to feel the effects of it on their health. The people just younger than that, to whom Prohibition is already beginning to be a thing of the past, have not the antagonistic attitude toward any suggestion of temperance which was felt so strongly by most of us during the Prohibition era as the result of our resentment over this restrictive law which had been foisted on the country."

We are sure Mrs. Sheppard is correct. Something should be done, though we realize we are not pioneering with this conviction. The drinking among all classes of boys and girls is appalling to us. Only on the Eastern seaboard does there seem to be a trend toward some instinctive social control. Young Main Albright, whom we met at the University of North Carolina, assures us that,

"There's more *orderly* drinking than there used to be. And we don't pretend that we don't drink. The Student Council has no regulation against it. But we frown on gross drunken-

ness and public drunkenness. Of course," he adds, "we distinguish between being vulgarly drunk and pleasantly tight."

Among boys and girls either unemployed or engaged in makeshift jobs with no promise of a future, drinking is an obvious "escape." It is only one of the most obvious, however.

We find other phenomena, well known to psychologists but never realities to us until we see them ourselves. Escape from their daily lives whether via the movies, or romantic reading, or by dangerous indulgence in drinking, becomes as vital a factor in these young lives as bread or breathing.

These youngsters daydream to throw off reality. One pretty girl in Little Rock tells us a story we hear, with slight variations, all too often. "Jerry—the man I'm engaged to—runs a filling station. He wants to be a doctor. So he's working till he can save enough money. He's twenty-five now. Isn't that pretty late to start being a doctor? Of course, we enjoy planning on it. He's a grand person. He's real high-brow. We read good books together, and we have a good time laughing at the filling station. But I'm worried——"

We burn out an electric fuse, doing some thrifty pressing in a hotel in Salt Lake City, and are pleased when a youth in striped denim overalls and a charmingly cultivated manner comes to repair the damage.

"I do all sorts of odd jobs around," he informs us. "It's a funny way for a fellow who got halfway through dentistry at the University of Michigan to end up, isn't it? No money to finish, you see, and no ability to do anything but excavate your molars and vacuum-clean the hall carpets."

We recognize this. We encounter it also on every hand. It is called the Mary Richardson type of escape, a psychiatrist instructs us. That is, when a difficulty, like a shame, is told to some one else, it ceases to be a difficulty or a shame.

Inability to find work develops all sorts of persecution complexes. Here's a lad in St. Louis who blames the business men. Says he, "The majority of these men have not been satisfied with robbing our parents of their life savings which they had earned through years of hard work. No ma'am. Their minds are so small and busy trying to build a kingdom or a monument for themselves that they are completely ignoring the American youth and are depriving us of our chance. Some of us have parents who have lost everything. So it's up to us to shoulder responsibility and provide for our homes. We go out and seek employment with greatest of earnestness, and what do we run into? So-called business leaders of this country who refuse to give us work, fearing that if they do we would stoop to their level and rob them as they robbed our parents. That's what has happened to several friends of mine just recently, and to me."

This boy is no less uncommon than the lad who thinks some of his teachers are "against him" and prevent him from getting a job.

Nor is it unusual to find young men and women escaping the implications of the fact that they have no job, or cannot afford to marry on what they are earning, by blaming their parents. Often they hold their families responsible for their inability to secure adequate employment, and it's not rare for them to develop an actual hatred of their families.

There's sometimes basis for this. A youngster with a pay envelope has a different status in his home from a dependent young adult. He's independent. He commands respect. He has the potential freedom to go and live by himself if he prefers.

Overcrowding is a constant cause of family friction, which adds to the sense of frustration of the unemployed, or unhap-

pily occupied young person. The depression years have seen families doubled up—girls sleeping on the davenport in an aunt's home; boys sharing their rooms with a couple of unwelcome small cousins, and so on. All this domestic discomfort increases these youngsters' natural discontent and despair, and it is not surprising to find that they hold their mothers and fathers guilty.

Inability to marry, we observe, causes untold misery, for, as we've seen, satisfaction of a biological urge isn't enough for our youth, even when they do indulge it. They want a home of their own, children, a place in the community. Thus when they can't marry the girls they love, they develop a sense of inferiority, inadequacy, which we often fear may leave them with an unbalanced viewpoint all their lives.

Yet, in spite of all this, this generation is, on the whole, rather remarkable. Those who are not destroyed by circumstance have quality.

The term "flaming youth" so popular in our day is a phrase they scarcely know. They don't believe, with us of our time, that "youth must be served."

They aren't afraid of hard work. As we've seen, they'll do anything.

There is little snobbery among them. With the exception of boys and girls in some sections of the South, they have little sense of social place. In the South, they make up for this inherited snobbery because they are taught that "Good citizenship should be the first avocation of a gentleman." And if, as its corollary, they unconsciously hold that only a "gentleman" has a right to be a citizen in the full sense, why, they're not aggressive about it. Not within the limits of the white race.

Neither the rich nor the poor are particularly money-conscious. They're not cocky as we were, nor do they show any indications of that cynicism which characterized us in our youth.

They have the most serious situation, psychologically and economically, that has ever faced a generation of American boys and girls. They are as vitally important to us, as a people, as any link in a chain.

## *Chapter Fifteen*

### OLD FOLKS AT HOME

MOST CHILDREN were born to parents. Most of them still have their mothers and fathers today.

Most of their parents face their young sons and daughters with a depressing lack of understanding. Children, we note parenthetically, never do understand their parents, either. They never try. With the inconsistent egotism of youth, they think they do, and besides, why should they?

We cannot condemn the older folks for their failure to grasp the special problems of this generation. After all, most of us know only what life has taught us. Most mothers can impart wise advice to their daughters about housekeeping; about bundling up their babies and giving them plenty of fresh air; about the care and feeding of husbands. Most fathers can give their sons valuable suggestions about their business; about savings and insurance; about remembering to send roses to the wife on their wedding anniversary; and for goodness sakes, wipe off your muddy feet before walking over the clean floors; she has to scrub them.

The condition in which their Johns and Marys find themselves is entirely outside their experience. In their day, if a man was willing to work he could find a job. If a girl was normally attractive, she found herself a beau and married him. The old folks were sorry to have them break up the home; they left aching vacancies. That was the way of life.



So often that's different now. It's pleasant to have a daughter at home. But only if she wants to stay there, and the family can afford to keep her. A daughter who mopes and is irritable because she cannot find work, or because her young man cannot afford to marry, is another story.

And a grown son puttering about the house all day is even worse than a husband involuntarily out of work. He's wretched and, manlike, succeeds in making everybody else as miserable as he is.

The majority of parents are kind and loving. They try to make it easy; insist they enjoy having their boys or their girls to themselves a little longer. Give them odd jobs around the place in an effort to make the poor kids feel they're needed! They are sympathetic, but they are usually baffled and helpless. In their own bewilderment, they often succeed in deepening their children's own unhappiness.

Mrs. Cheeseman is a perfect example of this. "I can't seem to do anything for my Ed," she mourns.

Mrs. Cheeseman was our dressmaker when I was a small girl. She used to come in the spring and in the fall and whirr away at the sewing machine for a week. Now she's still making dressing sacques and Sunday black silks for the elderly women in the small town in central Illinois where her husband is a clerk in a paper mill. She looks the same to us as she always did, except that her pleasant face has worried lines, and her broad bosom, decorated with pins, samples, bits of lace, and festooned by a tape measure and bias binding, has even more space for these implements.

Ed is her youngest son, and we knew it had taken considerable penny-pinching and contriving to send him through high school.

"You talk to Ed, won't you?" Mrs. Cheeseman implores.

"Maybe you can find out what's the matter. All he does all day is sit up in his room with the door closed and read. He never has anything to say to us any more. He goes out after dinner, and never tells us where. He won't even *try* to find a job. I'm not criticizing him, you understand. Poor kid, he's tried hard enough. You talk to him. You're younger."

So we talk to Ed. A nice, clean-looking boy whose straight-looking hazel eyes are clouded with boredom, and whose young mouth droops.

"What's the use?" he demands. "I've tried every place in town, over and over. All they say is, 'There's nothing doing today.' Or, 'What experience have you had?' And then they take your name and address and say, 'We'll let you know.' Hell, they never do.

"Here I am, forgetting everything I ever learned. I wouldn't be any good now if I *did* get a job.

"I feel like a dirty bum, living off of Ma and Pa this way. I know they're disappointed. They think I'm a failure. But they're sports, they are. Ma bakes a bigger birthday cake every year for me, to hold all the candles. They never say a word. Never mention how they scrimped and did without for me. But I know what they're thinking. You bet I do. But what can I do about it? What *can* I do?"

Not all parents are so patient as the Cheesemans, of course. Often they absolutely cannot understand why their children cannot find a place for themselves. How often have boys heard their fathers repeat with nagging pointedness,

"When I was your age I was married to your mother, and buying shoes and oatmeal for you and Bessie? Why, when I was only thirteen I used to get up at four in the morning and walk three miles into town on a mail route, and three

miles back to breakfast, winter and summer, to help your grandmother raise *us*. None of my children ever had to do a lick of work. So I guess they never will."

These fathers think the depression is a story in the newspapers, no more real than the war in Ethiopia or the yarn they read about a peach tree bursting into bloom in November on the terrace of a New York penthouse. They know in these lean years they've had to tighten their own belts. But they've made out, so why can't their sons do likewise? There's always work, they feel, for men who want to work.

Often, therefore, they nourish the belief that their children are soft or lazy. Farm fathers cannot understand why their sons don't like to work in the fields for them without pay. They get plenty to eat, don't they, whatever the price of hogs? They have a roof, haven't they? That's a durned sight more than they'd have if they had to live in the city.

City fathers are suspicious if their sons aren't trudging around looking for work all day every day. They rarely suggest more education, and they seldom have any patience or belief in employment agencies.

Unemployment is not the only basis for misunderstanding between this generation and its elders. There is still the white-collar legend to battle. A good plumber wants his Sam to rise a rung or so in the social scale. He doesn't want him in overalls and smeared with oil from morning till night. He had to slave over furnaces and drains all his life. He wants Sammy to have a chance at something better. So Sammy learns to be a lawyer, regardless of his fitness for the law, or even his lack of interest in torts or precedents. And certainly without regard for the fact that the country needs good plumbers much more than it does mediocre lawyers. Or, if Sammy doesn't want to be a lawyer, at least he can get into business. So dad

balks his efforts to get a job as a mechanic at the garage, and keeps him hunting an office desk. Oh, he's disappointed and disgusted if his son is so spineless as to take an overall job—after all the money spent on his education!

School people sometimes make an effort to stem this parental ambition, but they rarely have any great success. In the office of the principal of a commercial high school we hear an argument just as it is reaching hurricane proportions.

Mamma, a billowing German woman, has a grievance, and she isn't hesitant about expressing it.

"What for you don't want my Gertrude should study for a secretary? Ain't my Gertrude a good girl? Ain't my Gertrude smart, heh?"

The principal, a half-pint pedagogue, has truly Napoleonic courage. "I'm not saying she isn't either, Mrs. Schiller. I'm trying to tell you that you are simply preparing your daughter for probably heartaches and failures. Gertrude doesn't have either the aptitudes or the personality for secretarial work."

"And why not?"

The principal looks at Gertrude who sits dully beside her mother, an overweight pimply adolescent, remarkable only for her lack of even the most commonplace freshness of youth. So thickly cocooned in misery is she that it is impossible to guess whether she pines for a secretarial career or whether she's too stupid to care.

We can see the principal thinking that he can't tell Mrs. Schiller that her budding flower is so blighted that no man will have her in his office, and so slow that she'd be useless to him even if she were able to diet and exercise and beauty-parlor herself into a Ziegfeld houri.

"Gertrude would have a far better chance of a good job if she would go over to the vocational school and learn how

to work in a factory," he suggests. Apparently he has mentioned this before.

"Nein," Mrs. Schiller bellows. "We pay taxes. Always we want our Gertrude should be a secretary. Her vater he works in a factory. Our baby, she can do better. Ain't she as good as anybody? Ain't our tax money the same as anybody's?"

The principal gives up. "All right. All right. Here Gertrude. Take this note to Miss Caspar in Room 107."

We are sorry for Gertrude. We can see her future as well as that patient and conscientious principal. Parents, we reflect, are more blind than lovers. They cannot see their offspring as they are, and they certainly do not see the world their children live in for the place it is.

They will not believe in the trends of the times, especially when it conflicts with their own habits and beliefs. Or if they see enough to concede their existence, they decry them violently.

Here's a mother in St. Paul who has heard that young people sometimes love without benefit of clergy. "If my daughter, who is unmarried, should have a baby, I would stand beside her. She'd always have her home. But I believe my heart would be broken," she warns. "And how much better off would she be after such a performance? She'd live to regret it all the rest of her life. Better encourage young people today to marry on lesser salary, enjoy inexpensive pleasures, and work. These hard times aren't lasting. They should use their brains to outwit them, not give up, give in, and lower their morals."

This mother would probably be scandalized at a memorable example of some of the parents who are inclined to look at life through more carefully adjusted lenses. He is a promotion manager of a department store in Louisville, and he has

three sons and a daughter. "My wife and I know that all kids drink," he admits. "We don't think ours are any different than any of the rest of them. So we tried to analyze the reason for drunkenness. We concluded one of the reasons is they don't know how to drink. We decided to teach them, at home. We try to have them do as much of their partying in our own house as we can. We give them plenty of liquor, good liquor. We teach them not to mix their drinks, and how to space their drinks. We try to let them know how foolish they look when they're drunk. And make them understand you shouldn't gulp a highball. That you ought to wait a while between rounds, to see how the last one has affected you. It's not always the same. We think we're getting results."

We wonder, however, if either of these parents, the hysterical mother in St. Paul or the worldly father in Louisville, would go so far as to render financial help to their children when they want to marry. For it would be a solution, to a certain extent, where it is possible.

The young folks have thought of it. We meet a girl in Akron who expresses it well. We encounter on the manicured lawn of a quite good imitation of a Norman cottage, knitting a sweater.

"For my trousseau," she explains. "It's not going to be much of a trousseau, either. But we won't need much. My fiancé is working in a furniture store, and he isn't making a fortune.

"My mother, and my father and his wife—they're all furious. Just because Jody isn't making enough, they think, to support me properly. But I don't think that matters a lot, do you? None of my parents"—she paused, giggled, and blushed—"This one is my father's third wife, you know. Any-

how, none of them seem very happy, and they all have plenty.

"They don't know what's important in marriage. We don't care if we never have much money, as long as Jody keeps his job. I learned a lot about home-making in school, and we like things that don't cost much. Just the same—" and here a slight, a very slight, tinge of bitterness crept into her voice, "wouldn't you think they could give us a little allowance while we're young? They'll all leave us everything when they die, and we're too old to enjoy it."

"Would your fiancé let you accept it?"

"Why not? Of course he would. We've often discussed it. After all, he's willing to work hard, and he has a good education. His family isn't poor either. It isn't his fault he can't find as good a job as his dad did when he started. It's the depression, you know. Jody was glad to get any kind of a job. He thinks he's lucky, the way things are. So do I.

"But we didn't make this world. It's the fault of business men like my father. So why shouldn't they help us now? But of course they won't. They still think the Alger books are the Bible."

These attitudes extend beyond the family limits. Most of us adults cannot believe that healthy willing industrious boys and girls cannot find work, marry, and settle down, even as we did. The composite of the parental viewpoint becomes our social concept. Therefore we're unwilling to help them work out their problems. We are blind. We refuse to see that their problems exist.

This is demonstrated to us vigorously when we return home and prepare to report our findings in this book. A

friend, an experienced and big-hearted journalist, became emphatic and heated.

"Don't be ridiculous," she jeers. "This generation isn't any different from any other. My family was poor, I had to work my way through school, and I've been working ever since. There's always unemployment, and there's always misfits. Look at your own family and see 'em. There's plenty of work to be done by anybody who has the energy and the backbone to go out and find it. Then they can get married and have children just like all the rest of us."

Is there opportunity? Fill up the gas-tank. Change the oil and pump up the tires. Come along. We'll see.



**PART THREE**  
**TO EARN THEIR BREAD**



## *Chapter One*

### IN THE FACTORY

OUR JOBLESS boys and girls are casualties of the depression. How many of them are permanent sufferers—fatalities—and how many will benefit by economic recovery is a question only time can answer.

They have this in common with that lost generation of the war years across the Atlantic: Nothing can give them back the time they have lost. They may yet breast the full stream of living. Whether they will be able to stroke strongly or whether, while sitting on the banks and watching, they have lost their practice and their skill and will have to spend the rest of their days treading water, we do not know and are reluctant to guess.

Let us, however, look at the opportunities and the handicaps before them today. As they tell us so often, "Things are picking up. Times are better." Let us see what it means to them.

As this writer fled from the schoolroom doors like a frightened doe at the very mention of the greatest common multiple and the least common divisor, and was barred from a couple of the best women's colleges because co-sines and tangents were exact equivalents to an overdose of chloroform to her feeble brain, we won't use many statistics. We will avoid tables as we would the bubonic plague, and as for technical

documentation, we will assiduously elude it. After all, we are reporting, not engaged in research.

It is necessary, however, to secure a few figures that we may have a bird's-eye view of the world where the Tommy Stonehills, Tony Picattis, the barbers' daughters, and the Dirk Conways expect to find their path up into the light of busy, meaningful lives, compact not only with subsistence but with hope and progress.

We do not know exactly how many of these boys and girls are unemployed. Aubrey Williams, chief of the National Youth Administration, told the Welfare Council of New York City in October 1935 that it was estimated that there were at that time between five and eight million young people between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five wholly unoccupied, either at work or in school.

Mr. Williams gives this only as a broad figure. Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, in a letter to the United States Senate on April 5, 1935, brings out these fuller estimates:

By July 1, 1934, the young people in the United States between sixteen and eighteen years old numbered approximately 4,800,000; and those between eighteen and twenty-four inclusive numbered sixteen millions.

According to the 1930 figures, the last accurate ones available, Miss Perkins told the Senate that 59 per cent of the boys and girls sixteen and seventeen years old were attending school only, and not gainfully employed, and 32 per cent of the balance were working. Of the older age group, 10 per cent were at school and 63 per cent were at work. At that time, 28 per cent were neither in school nor at work. Of this latter group, 86 per cent were girls.

Miss Perkins pointed out that of the sixteen million young people between eighteen and twenty-four in this country,

slightly more than half are girls, 3,500,000 of whom are married. About one and a half millions of the total number, she said, are attending full-time school.

The Secretary of Labor further quoted the estimates of unemployment made by the American Federation of Labor and the National Industrial Conference Board. The former believes that 2,205,500 boys and girls between eighteen and twenty-four were totally unemployed on December 1, 1934; and the latter estimated 2,005,000 youthful jobless.

Add half of the boys and girls between sixteen and eighteen to that number, and we have an estimate of about four and a half million young people without any employment whatsoever. This is almost a quarter of all the young men and women between sixteen and twenty-four in this country.

All this, you may object, was figured before we sally forth to discover the youth of the land. Then prosperity was just peeking coyly around the corner. Since then she had come striding down the street. On the first of June 1935 the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that production in manufactured industries was up to 70 per cent of the 1929 high, and in November the President told the country it had soared to 90 per cent of production five years ago.

Naturally we'd expect this to blow the factory whistle summoning many of our boys and girls into the ranks of industry, wouldn't we? Well, here's the situation in one typical city: Niagara Falls. We select Niagara Falls because the Council of Social Agencies, with the assistance of relief workers, conducted a survey of a representative portion of local youth from July 22 to September 12, 1935. It is the last city to publish reports from such an investigation as this is written. Other similar surveys show approximately the same situation.

Starting with a list of 11,000 young people between seventeen and twenty-five, the workers making the survey interviewed every fifth person. To this group they added the graduates of the Trott Vocational and the Niagara Falls high school over the last four years, with the result that 2,497 young people were personally interviewed.

Here is what they discovered: About one-fourth to one-third of the total number are still in full-time school. Another third have full-time jobs. The last third is out of school and unemployed.

These are not the stupid, uneducated youngsters. The report states that 26 per cent of all of them are high school graduates, and 85 per cent are graduates of junior high school, or have had at least nine years of school training. Only 5 per cent of all of them had left school before they finished the eighth grade.

Now none of this gives us any data as to the number of boys and girls who have been able to find part-time work, or who are eking out an existence in the makeshift jobs we've seen them filling. This study, however, reveals these clues: Over 90 per cent of all the boys and girls interrogated are unmarried. Thirty per cent of them are prepared for commercial occupations, but only 17 per cent are now actually engaged in it. In industrial employment it's a little better, for 17 per cent are trained for it and 15 per cent are employed in industry.

The professional group, while naturally small, presents an unhappy picture: three per cent of these young people are educated and ready for professional occupations, but only a third of them are earning their living by the equipment they have acquired.

We know this is not representative of employment condi-

tions in this country. A third of the workers are not jobless, although conditions coincident to recovery are not so rosy for the worker as for the stockholder.

As we observed above, in the fall of 1935, Mr. Roosevelt advised the nation that industrial production was 90 per cent of what it was five years before. He also told us—and this gives us pause—that only 82 per cent as many people were employed. More: They were earning only 74 per cent as much as they did at that time, five years ago.

This naturally raises the question: will there ever again be work enough to go around? Is the labor-saving machine a thousand coolies robbing American workmen of their means of livelihood, or is it an advance-guard breaking trails, opening new frontiers, creating new jobs? The future of our young people is inextricably woven into this problem.

Says Charles G. Ross, Pulitzer prize winner, and editor of the liberal *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, "A return to prosperity in full bloom would fall far short of solving our problems. They would merely be obscured again until the next depression, just as they were obscured in the too bright sunshine of the Coolidge era.

"For there is a phase of unemployment—a very large phase—which is caused not by sickness or old age or any fault of the workman, but by the use of labor-saving machinery and methods. This 'technological unemployment' as the economists call it, is a growing and persistent factor in our economic life. It is the price we pay for the industrial progress of the machine age."

The magnitude of this price may be gathered from a few examples:

The output per worker in the manufacturing industries increased during the last decade by 45 per cent, while the

number of wage-earners declined. There were 900,000 fewer wage-earners in the factories before the depression struck the country in 1929 than there were ten years earlier—a decline of 10 per cent.

Accompanying an increase in railway efficiency during the decade from 1919 to 1929 came a 20 per cent decrease in the number of employees or from about two million to one million, six hundred thousand.

While the output per worker in the coal mines increased, the number of miners fell by nearly 200,000.

In the same decade, 800,000 workers were eliminated from agriculture.

Here, from data gathered by the American Federation of Labor, are a few concrete examples of the effect of the machine on employment:

In casting pig-iron seven men now do the work which formerly required sixty. Two men replace 128 in loading pig-iron. One man does the work of forty-two in the operation of open-hearth furnaces.

Thirty workers in a tube shop produce with ten machines what formerly required 240 workers with twenty machines.

One man used to take eighty hours to make 450 bricks; now there is a machine which turns out 40,000 bricks an hour.

In the manufacture of boots and shoes, one hundred machines have taken the place of 25,000 men. In the manufacture of electric-light bulbs a machine turns out 73,000 bulbs in twenty-four hours as compared with only forty bulbs per man per day as late as 1918.

With an automatic fish-scaling machine, one man can scale forty fish a minute regardless of their size, as compared with three fish a minute by a hand operation.



New York subway trains are now operated by two men, instead of the seven formerly required.

The Boston and Maine Railroad has a freight-handling machine that saves the labor of 400 men.

In the tobacco industry a machine with an "electric eye" has replaced human eyes in the sorting of cigars by shades. The machine handles 4,000 cigars an hour.

In the manufacture of sewing-machine needles there is a machine that inspects for crooked needles. It does work that formerly required nine expert girls.

In the slaughtering and meat-packing industry, the man-hour output was 26 per cent higher in February 1934 than the average for 1929.

According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics' figures, the long upward trend in man-hour output was temporarily halted in 1930. This was because of a sharp decline in production and the prevailing view that the depression would soon be over and that labor forces should be retained intact with comparatively few layoffs.

From 1931 on, however, the increase in the man-hour output was resumed. As employers realized the gravity of the depression, they sought to reduce their costs by various means, including sharp reduction of labor forces and utilization of all available methods for increasing average man-hour output.

Dr. Isador Lubin, commissioner of the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, denies that all this is due to new inventions. "Industry," he says, "is learning it doesn't need as many men. One of the largest rubber clothing manufacturers in the country states he can produce as much today as they could in 1929 with three-quarters of the number of workers *without changing machinery*."

"The largest manufacturer of paper products can turn out

the same quantity of goods with one-third less workers, and *no marked change in his plant.*"

Now this gives an answer to a popular idea: that there is no such thing as permanent technological unemployment; that while a new labor-saving machine may temporarily displace men, it ultimately provides employment for many more. This has certainly happened in the past. It is the record of our whole industrial development. But Dr. Lubin raises another situation altogether.

"In terms of radical changes, new machinery and new methods of production count comparatively little today," he believes. "There are, however, other factors, such as increased efficiency resulting from better arrangement and management. There are other equations also. For example: speed. In the cotton garment industry in 1933-35 the output per individual worker increased thirty-three per cent with higher speed machinery.

"There is combination of old inventions. In automobile manufacturing, three machines, and three operations, are combined in one. That's not radical or revolutionary; it's evolutionary.

"In welding there has been tremendous development. Where bolts were once used, the welding process is now found efficient and cheaper. Welding is an old process.

"The greatest changes recently have been in new chemical processes. We see it in such things as catalin and bakelite. Most gadgets in an automobile were once made of metal, fashioned by many operations. Now the factory takes liquid and pours it into a mold. In Ford cars, for instance, the whole steering wheel is made of soya beans."

What happens to men who lose their jobs through technological improvements? A study published in 1929 by Dr.

Lubin, then associated with the Brookings Institution, is illuminating. It covered 754 industrial workers who had been laid off. Only 54.5 per cent had obtained new work; 45.5 per cent were still unemployed, and about half of these had been idle for over three months, and some for a year. Dr. Lubin reached the conclusion that the so-called "newer" industries and service trades were not absorbing dispossessed workers so widely as has been believed.

Now just what does all this mean to the boys and girls of this generation we've been meeting?

We've seen that industry doesn't need so many men as it did. In the course of time this may change. During the life of the NRA, there were more men employed because of the codes. Since the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional, according to Dr. Lubin, there has been a trend toward lengthening hours. In one of the largest industries of the country there is not a single important plant which is not working more hours than provided by its former NRA code. Still, because of social necessity, some may follow the example of the Kellogg Cereal Plant in Battle Creek, which in November 1935 made permanent a six-hour day, with eight-hour wages. These changes are slow, however, and while they are coming at tortoise pace, our boys and girls are losing their productive years.

Still, employment *has* increased. In manufacturing, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' index of Industrial Production, it had jumped in October 1935 to 83.5 compared to 64.4 in October 1932.

How have our young people benefited? We can find no surveys to show employment policies, so we make a few investigations ourselves. How, we wonder, do great industries go about hiring new men and women when they need them?

Do young men and women have an opportunity based on merit? Is their youth an asset or a liability?

Here is the International Harvester Company, in Chicago. This institution has been extremely generous with its employees during the depressed period. It kept as many as possible, on part-time if not on full-time work. It maintained its own relief rolls. When business improved, it promptly began to call back its old employees.

This has been General Motors' policy, as outlined by Louis G. Seaton, of its Department of Industrial Relations: "At the present time almost all of our plants are hiring on the basis of seniority. Our employees are divided into three groups: Class A men who have had less than a year's service; Class B men who have had more than a year's service but no dependents; Class C men who have had more than a year's service but have dependents. Class A men are laid off first, Class B men second, and Class C men last. Naturally they are re-hired in reverse order."

One of the greatest oil companies has approximately the same policy. It gives preference to former employees, particularly those with dependents.

This holds in many great corporations.

We find few, like the General Electric Company, whose supervisor of personnel, G. H. Pfeif, tells us, "It is our employment policy to give preference to former employees with dependents, although we have employed several hundred young men under twenty-one years of age during the past year. We all feel that one of the most difficult problems ahead of us is the employment of young people graduated from high schools since 1929 and who have been unable to find anything because they are single and without dependents. In several of our plants, the older employee situation has been

cleared up and they have been able to take on a large number of these young people, but in other plants the situation has not cleared."

Not only does the unmarried young man and the young woman without dependents have to face the competition of workers who need jobs even more than they do, but they are also the unfortunate outsiders in the job-sharing program in effect in a good many industries.

In the enormous United States Steel Company, this situation has maintained. Says Arthur H. Young, vice-president in charge of industrial relations, "We developed the share-the-work plan. We had about 200,000 employees. Last month (September 1935) we were operating at forty-five per cent of capacity. Forty per cent of our men were still working part time, and twelve per cent had no work at all."

This situation, Mr. Young believes, will not last forever. His corporation has evolved a program which will include standardized employment policies, as we shall presently see.

The share-the-work policy is conspicuous in highly organized industries. Here is Hart, Schaffner, and Marx, manufacturers of men's clothing. Officials of this firm state that their business is better, but they record practically no new employment. On the contrary they have within two hundred of the same working force they maintained in 1929, and still have more than they need. They divided work, under agreement with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. The result was steady employment but low incomes. In this industry, its leaders admit frankly, opportunities for young men and women do not exist for the moment, although heretofore it has always been a young people's occupation.

The Amalgamated, one of the best unions, is typical of most. It takes only new apprentices to train as they are

needed. It has a responsibility to industry : to maintain a supply of well-equipped labor. But it does not provide any more than the factories actually need. And, as we see, they have not been requiring much.

In quite a number of cases, we find the boy or girl with less than a full high-school education suffers in competition with those who would normally fill the so-called "white-collar" jobs. In the factory of the Reynolds Tobacco Company, for example, a number of these young people have been employed. Even they lost out in competition with persons with dependents as a rule. For this firm wanted to hire constructively and so went to the relief agencies and gave the jobs more frequently than otherwise to men and women with families to support.

Now we have been discussing, for the most part, unskilled labor, which, after all, accounts for the bulk of the wage-earners in this country.

In factories where all the former employees are accounted for, and where there is no definite policy of hiring married men with dependents, our boys and girls may have a chance to win jobs. Again we quote Dr. Lubin :

"There is no doubt that in many industries men over forty-five have a hard time coming back. They've lost part of their skill. Plants do not want to take on men they will have to let go for lack of facility, for poor health, or similar reasons. Go through the newest automobile plants where seniority is not practiced in hiring. You will see that most men on the assembly line are under thirty. They do their work faster, and it does not take as long to train them. This means a preference for younger people. In terms of the type of work done by the bulk of the labor supply in the mechanized industries, you can train a man in a month to be as good

as he will be in a year. The result, as I see it, is that as the heavy industries develop—and they still have a long distance to go before they get back to 1929—there will be more and more opportunities. A million and a half people are still to be taken back into the durable goods industries, if they are to get back to the employment level of six years ago.”

There is, added to this, the fact that employers under the new social security legislation would rather hire men who will not be retired and ready for a pension in comparatively few years.

Nor is education, or lack of it, a handicap in the unskilled industries. Mr. Seaton of General Motors says, “We do not have any minimum educational requirement as far as I know for unskilled and semi-skilled labor. The educational requirements normally would depend on the type of job for which the men were being hired. We do not like to have people in our plants who cannot read or readily understand the English language.”

Education is always an asset, however. Cyrus Ching of the United States Rubber Company tells us that while it is not a requirement in this organization it is preferred.

This in general holds everywhere where purely repetitive processes are involved. Nor is skill essential in the bulk of industrial labor. Labor today is composed chiefly of this semi-skilled variety, which may be taught in a few weeks or months, rather than requiring the years of training needed in the past.

Thus we see that, if employment increases, the boys and girls who want, or are fitted for, nothing more than unskilled work, will have some chance of being absorbed into the stream of working folk who throng the streets before the factory gates each morning.

We doubt if they will all be absorbed. The improvements in the industrial processes we have reviewed preclude that. This improvement in efficiency isn't going to stop today. As factories reduce forces, the first they dismiss are their newest employees. They will need fewer and fewer men per units of production. Mr. Young tells us that the United States Steel Corporation is spending seventy million dollars on new mills, electrically driven, fitted with automatic and remote-control devices. The old mills, which roared like the battle of the Marne, will hum like sewing machines. We'll see no one on the floor at all.

This will make opportunity for the more intelligent, better-trained man. Many boys, Mr. Young states, will take the place of the men who by pure brawn rolled steel. The alert and the nimble-minded will have their chance, for when a man sits before a board like an organ controlling the operation of many thousands of dollars' worth of machinery and products every instant, he has a grave responsibility. He must be able to carry it.

The modernization of these plants is being accompanied by a significant labor policy in this, one of the largest and most far-flung companies in the United States, and formulated by the executives of the various plants.

In the first place, the Steel Corporation is setting up an "employment reserve" based upon the highest possible standards for each grade of work. The selection of an employee is being based upon his physical and mental fitness for the job, and his ability to perform the work. He is being placed on the job not only with a full knowledge of its requirements, but also with its line of advancement. Complete personnel records will be maintained.

Then, each company is estimating its requirements for



skilled craftsmen, and organizing apprentice courses to meet them. These apprentices must, preferably, be high-school graduates, or their equivalent. However, the companies are cooperating with local trade schools where they consider it desirable, and shortening the apprentice courses by giving credit for the time the boy has spent in the vocational school.

In addition to this, the companies are organizing a foremen's training program, which includes conferences not only on subjects pertinent to their work, but also discussions of problems arising from the operation of the Steel Corporation's Employees Representation Plan, and the proper methods of settling those problems.

There will be job training. Each company is studying positions requiring special knowledge and training, and furnishing to the men in these posts the latest information on approved methods and practices, so that each man may do his work in the one best way of handling his particular job.

Technically trained men are being recruited from the colleges, and incorporated into a working reservoir of highly trained persons, which affords definite work for them, and is not merely a school. However, men in this group will not be preferred above men of outstanding ability already employed in the various departments.

Finally, each company is establishing a group of progressive employees, including these technically trained young men, together with those within the organization who have had only limited special education but who possess qualities of ability and leadership essential to supervisory positions. These men will be encouraged to continue their studies, and be given opportunities to listen to department heads and other specialists discuss the work of the various parts of the company. They will be rated by several officials, and promotions

based on these ratings. There will be inter-company exchange of information concerning the qualifications of the outstanding members in this group of progressive employees, affording opportunity for promotions on an inter-company basis, and will undoubtedly serve as an added incentive to the young men.

Here is a grand chance for the superior youth. No one can fail to applaud enthusiastically the fathers of such a hopeful program in such a vast institution.

This sort of thing, however, does not hold much cheer for the lad whose brawn and good intentions are his only qualifications!

This then, is the picture which boys and girls without any special training or any very high degree of intelligence must face. Their chances, we'd guess, are about even. That is, they've a fifty per cent chance of being idle all the days of their lives—through no fault of their own whatsoever, for if industry does not climb rapidly, soon, or make some radical changes in employment policies, it will not need many of them until older employees die or grow too old to work. By that time there will be another generation of younger, swifter boys and girls. And when factories want young people, they want the youngest!

So much for this group. Now let us investigate the opportunities for skilled workmen, young people who are fitted for work requiring a greater amount of intelligence, education, and ability.

In spite of statements from a number of industries to the contrary, both the American Federation of Labor and Dr. Lubin assert that there is no evidence of any actual shortage of skilled labor.

So much for the market.

What has happened to boys and girls with training? From all we can learn, boys who wanted apprentice training, or who had it, up to 1933, are simply out of luck.

As for the latter, they too had to give way in the wave of unemployment before the older employee, or the man with dependents. After a man whose trade requires extreme care and accuracy, involving measurements down to a split thousandth of an inch, as is necessary in tool and pattern making, is out of work a while, he loses that skill. Unless he is re-trained, or has had opportunity to keep in practice, he is almost worthless.

Many great firms which normally had apprentice schools, such as International Harvester, were forced to close them during the pit of the depression. The labor unions trained few apprentices; they did not have enough work for their regular members.

General Electric has been famous for its apprentice school. Here is the situation in this institution; as outlined by Mr. Pfeif: "At each of the apparatus plants of the Company we maintain apprentice courses. These too were curtailed during the depression, but new boys have been hired during the past two years. The number working is reduced from the 1929 figures but we are expanding the program as rapidly as conditions will permit. In all of our apprentice departments we handle production work and it is rather a fine question to decide whether we should increase the number of apprentices when we still have employees with dependents out of work. We feel that it is very necessary to train young men for the skilled trades and that these young men will be very much needed as we get back to normal business conditions. At the present time we are engaging high-school graduates for the apprentice courses."

There has been some employment, or some opportunity for apprentice training, for learning skilled occupations since 1933, but not much. Moreover, while skilled labor is vital to industry, the factory does not require a great deal of it. Up until twenty-five years ago when a man made a whole product, a boy was apprenticed for seven years. He had to be, to learn everything. Nowadays life is more complicated. In quantity production, no man could know every operation. There are, for instance, 325 different ones involved in making a shoe. So one man taps heels, another stamps soles, and so on. There are few trades at which the stupidest cannot work. The skilled employees constitute but a small fraction of the total number. No, there aren't the opportunities in skilled labor that the ignorantly optimistic imagine.

There are, however, a great many sins committed in the name of apprenticeship. Boys and girls are unmercifully exploited as "learners," where they do not know any better, or are helpless to protest and cannot go elsewhere, and where there is no law to protect them. This occurs usually in the smaller factories, not in the great ones.

Some of them underpay. We met little Irish Nellie in the juvenile court, arrested for stealing because her half-pay wouldn't cover a ten-cent powder and rouge compact.

We visit a razor factory where exactly the same situation exists: girls work six days a week, eight hours a day wrapping razors for \$9.25 for three days' work. The other three days, they're "apprenticed."

Dr. Kepecs tells us that since the abolition of the NRA, the labor market for young people is better. They find employment at seven and eight dollars a week, where older men and women were employed at almost double that pay. He tells us of a girl he found on relief. She'd been working for starva-

tion wages. She had no home, no family. She tired of it and quit. "Why should I work?" she queried. "I don't get any more out of it than I do from charity. And no time for any books or exercise, either."

These smaller plants exploit the more self-respecting, better-educated boys and girls, too, at the expense of these submerged groups. Why hire a roustabout at fifteen dollars a week to drive a truck when you can get a trained engineer to do it for ten?

All these employers are apt to make fine general statements about taking young people into their plants as they come, on their merits as workmen. Actually, the superior type has a better chance everywhere.

The only exception to this is in the substandard jobs. Those not well-favored by fortune have a break here. Pimpily, unengaging little nondescripts may have jobs at wages below the subsistence level.

For the rest, the employer naturally prefers a girl or a boy with a good personality. That's human. He wants his employee to be alert, fairly well-groomed, and prepossessing. We think this is sometimes pretty hard when a youngster has been trudging the streets for weeks, months, and even years. When pennies for cleansing fluid and face powder loom large as cartwheels.

As we've said, a high-school certificate is a help, and it is often a prerequisite where it never was before.

Some factories even have their particular prejudices. One in Queens, in New York, wants blue-eyed blondes. Not because the employer is a Turk, or a Hitler, but because he has some notions about stamina of nationality and racial stock in mind!

For vast numbers of average boys and girls, the future in

industry seems to us unpredictable. We have the impression—and it is only an impression, the result of our observation—that the bulk of the idle youth in this country is to be found in the homes of the poor and the underprivileged. They are the young men and women with the least endowment of education, training, appearance, and intellectual quality. Some of them will always be weak and unfit. Most of them are young counterparts of the men and women who have always turned the wheels of industry in the least-paid and simplest positions. For the boys and girls with more courage and initiative, more intelligence and training, have often found something to do, some little thing whether it be blacking boots or carrying sandwich signs. Then they are not listed “unemployed.”

For those who are standing in line each morning at the factory gates, however, while the skies aren't clear and sunny, there are at least breaks in the clouds here and there.

Some of them have been idle so long they will never want to work, and probably won't. Some of them have lost their health on meagre rations. Some of them have gotten so old that they will never display the quickness and concentration necessary.

At the great Cannon Textile Mills in North Carolina, we see a lad stretched in something like a deck chair watching a series of tremendous machines that look to us like gargantuan wringers. They do something about stretching the cotton from the looms and the washing processes.

“That's a soft job,” we comment to our guide. “What does he get paid for sitting there all day?”

Fifteen dollars a week, we learn. But he can't let his thoughts wander. He can't daydream or catnap. He has to be alert for any infinitesimal deviation in the performance of any of those machines. A boy who has lost, or never gained,

this power of tense concentration and attention would be out on the street in short order.

However, that boy has his job. Some of the others will find work too. But the increased efficiency in factory management, improvement in machinery and mechanical and chemical processes, and probably more new inventions and combinations of old ones, will continue to cut down industry's need for labor. Recovery will offset this to a certain extent. Men at work will grow old, retire, be pensioned, or die. Industry itself may make provision for them as consumers by increased wages, thereby creating more demands, or by instituting shorter hours per man.

For many of these lads, the future is a spinning wheel. The ball may fall into their number. Or it may not. They cannot help themselves. They have to wait, and strain, and hope, and try again.

Whatever happens, the boys and girls in these reserve armies of industry are not leaders of revolution or social upheavals. Leaders usually come from the top strata to them. But they are the followers, the privates in the armies of brown and black shirts.

They may never have a chance to revolt or a leader to follow. At all events, idle youth is a social liability, either as a burden on the taxpayers, the workers, or as the stuff criminals are made of.

We refrain from prophecy. It's a footling game. Nor do we make the case for permanent technological unemployment. It has its advocates and it is also denied by distinguished economists who view with jeers.

Of this we are certain, however, that while industry readjusts itself, many of this generation are being left by the wayside, forever lost.

## *Chapter Two*

### IN STORE AND OFFICE

TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS who went forth from cloistered quadrangles and the serene halls of our high schools in the early part of this decade, their diplomas in hand and in their hearts youth's eternal conviction that the world was theirs, life has been a pretty disappointing business.

Not that they expected to get rich quickly and without effort. Not that they expected to rise on magic wings. They were too practical for that. No. Most of them hoped and planned to begin at the bottom and climb up through exercise of their own efforts and abilities—even as their fathers and their grandfathers before them. They expected to find the openings that had always been waiting eager energetic youth in the past.

Frequently in that halcyon past they knew before they left school exactly where they were going to work. Scouts of great corporations used to hide behind every campus tree, ready to tear a promising young fellow limb from limb before he could say "Boo!"

Large local firms even kept hopeful eyes on high schools for young people to lure into their employ. Ours was a young men's world, and business could not get enough of them. Ours was a dynamic world. Men and women were constantly moving up and on and out to bigger and better positions, leaving their desks clear for the juniors.



When the young men and women entered the working world in the early 1930's, the business index was dropping like the barometer before a Pacific typhoon. Employees with years of experience were walking the streets. Salaries were being slashed with guillotine relentlessness. Men and women who stayed on in their offices clung to whatever they had as to life itself.

Not only were there practically no openings for newcomers, but there was no activity within business houses: no promotions, few retirements, no leaving for better jobs. When there was no actual retrogression, there was a standing still.

This, then, was the world which faced boys and girls from 1930 until quite recently. With good business training, or fine technical education, they found they were not needed, were not wanted.

Let us see exactly what has happened:

We ask Mr. Vandaleur, the employer of Dirk Conway, the twenty-three-year-old messenger boy in the bank, just how he happens to be there. He explains it thus: "We have always had a policy of hiring promising boys of about eighteen as messengers, with the idea of working them up as other employees left or were promoted. But in the past five years there has been no change. I transmit my orders through my secretary. I'm ashamed to look a twenty-three-year-old messenger boy in the face!"

Great department stores which maintained numbers of part-time employees during the lean years have given these workers full-time jobs as times improved, according to Delos Walker, general manager of R. H. Macy and Company, of New York City.

Not until this past year have many girls dared to marry. Mr. Walker supplies us with a sidelight on this. "The average

girl's career is marriage," he observes sagely. "We don't discourage marriage in our employees. We give wedding gifts to anyone who has been with us over a year. I've signed three or four times as many vouchers for presents this summer as in the past five years. That doesn't mean they leave us either. We have no policy on that. Nature usually takes care of it for us!"

During the two years of 1932 and 1933 no graduates at all were taken into the General Electric Company's employ as potential technical and executive experts, contrary to the usual policy of this institution.

Even newspapermen, the most peripatetic of creatures, have been staying right where they were. We visit editorial rooms where we have worked, and are astonished at the number of familiar faces we see.

This holds in a great organization such as the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. Says W. J. O'Connor, assistant to the president: "During the depression, the Bell system lost 2,500,000 telephone stations out of a total of about 15,500,000. The volume of traffic, revenues, and telephone work was reduced in this or greater proportion. In normal times the telephone industry is a growing one and the requirements for employment increase not only in connection with ordinary operations but also because of a large construction program for providing new plant needed for growth and replacements. During the last few years much less plant than normal has been added, though the existing plant has been fully maintained and replaced when necessary.

"In this situation of reduced work volume, necessary readjustments of forces were effected by not replacing losses and by spreading available work among all employees rather than by resorting to lay-offs."

Technological unemployment has invaded the "white-collar" field also, though to a limited extent compared to industry. This is dramatically true in the telephone company, which replaced many operators with the dial telephone. However, this organization is model in its handling of this situation. Writes Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins in her book "People at Work," "The human problem of the displaced worker when the cutover was made from the manual to the dial system telephone exchanges is an almost perfect example of technological change made with a minimum of disaster. It was accomplished through human as well as technical planning. The company owned the patent for automatic signalling, which greatly reduced the number of girls held on central duty, for many years, but it did not put this technological improvement into operation until we were at the height of our prosperity and telephone extension was going on at a rate which had not been anticipated. So many more telephones were being installed that they could put the automatic device into effect at the same time that they were hiring more people than they had ever hired before."

Even this generous human planning does not, however, change the fact that there are fewer situations available to telephone operators than in the past. Of the hundreds of occupations in which women are listed in the Census of Occupations, according to Miss Perkins, only about a dozen employ more women than do the telephone companies.

There have been other technical changes in the office world. Where, for instance, it used to require three thousand people to compute the water bills for citizens of Los Angeles, now machines and twenty or twenty-five expert operators attend to this task.

Billing machines are in use in all corporations with a large volume of business.

Automatic bookkeeping machines take charge of their accounts.

New photographic processes are the last robots to replace men and women. Where records were copied at considerable labor cost, now cheap photostats are employed.

Moreover, some businesses which had a mushroom growth before the 1920 crash find themselves amply staffed, and with plenty of trained material for some time to come. The advertising agency is typical of this. F. R. Feland, treasurer of Batton, Barton, Durstine, and Osborn, one of the largest in this country, explains this for us:

"The opportunities for young people in this business appear to be greater over the long haul than they ever were before," he begins optimistically. "But immediate progress for young people has been slower than it was in the previous twenty-five; and may continue to be slow.

"This is not due alone to an economic condition, but to the great strides which took place in the advertising agency development from about 1905 to 1930. Things moved so fast in those years that advancement came quickly to those who knew the fundamentals of their craft. This fact has naturally tended to an exaggeration of the success cult in this industry. In older lines of business there is more patience with fortune and opportunity—and less disappointment.

"There is a marked tendency toward specialization in the business, and some advertising agencies make a practice of employing for staff positions only those people who have shown special and unusual talents in some particular field of work; such as media selection, store display, the mysterious science known as "merchandising," copy writing, art direc-

tion, radio showmanship, or business solicitation. Such agencies seldom bother to employ and train inexperienced people. They hire the men and women they want, at salaries sufficiently attractive, and expect them to be, as they usually are, immediately productive.

"Other agencies follow an almost opposite practice. They engage young men and women fresh from a completed education and endeavor to train those who appear to have brought to the business some qualities which are promising and desirable.

"Between these points of view there is, of course, the large middle ground of companies which incline first to one practice and then toward the other. Our own company has had its best success with people in developing young talent and pointing it in the direction toward which it should specialize."

However, the advertising agencies, like the telephone companies, the department stores, the banks, the offices and technical departments of factories and other businesses, haven't needed to introduce young talent into their domain during the overcast era.

As we've seen, these young people who weren't wanted have proved both courageous and decent. If they have been unable to find places as chemical engineers, as dieticians or expert accountants, as secretaries or "hello" girls or clerks, they have driven ice wagons, wrapped your bargains in broccoli or string beans, put on brass-buttoned uniforms and with their little flashlights led you to your two in the sixth row center—done anything. They have always had, as we have noted, an advantage over the boys and girls who would naturally fill these jobs because of their superior intelligence, poise, good humor, and quickness. But that has been of no especial cheer!

They have been thoroughly exploited in these capacities, though this is an outsider's observation. Probably no one can blame an employer for getting the best quality available for his money. A charming, cultivated girl in the window of a moving-picture theatre is naturally more attractive to the owner, and to the public, than a hard-boiled, gum-chewing peroxide blonde.

When these jobs are, as is more often the case than not, mere blind-alley occupations, with no hope of progress in avenues of work or in pay, they are tragic in that they eat up the best years of our boys and girls. The miracle—or the calamity—is that they accept their lot with chins up and without much revolt.

Sometimes, however, these futile-seeming positions do give them a break. In large or busy firms, they are at least on the inside, watchful and ready to grasp opportunity if she shows her face.

Here's a department-store manager in Rockford, Illinois. He tells us this story:

"We're working to get college-trained girls," he states frankly. "When the NRA went into force, we had colored girls as elevator operators. We had to raise their wages from seven to twelve dollars a week. They complained of something or other, so we fired them, and hired college girls to run our elevators. We had a deluge of applications when we advertised for them in the papers. We called them 'hostess operators.' We did not keep them on the elevators all the time. We let them learn the various departments. They all hold better jobs now.

"So we won't employ anyone now without a college or university background. We find they have more initiative. They're more interested in what they're doing, and they're

not afraid. They have no false pride, and they're not choosy.

"We decided to open an old-gold department, to buy up old gold. We offered the position to a number of our older women employees. None of them would touch it. They said it was too much like a pawnshop. So we just went out and got a socially prominent college girl who needed a job. She was enormously successful."

College girls, this executive finds, seem more interested in their "careers" even though they, like all of their sisters, hope for marriage. He likes to keep them, even if, or when, they do marry. In fact, he prefers matrons to maids so much that half his force is married. "They're more efficient. They don't have dates. They're not in such a doggone hurry to get away on Saturdays," he finds.

These girls who went into the department store as elevator operators had their chance for promotion, and took it, although of course the management of the store did keep a speculative eye on their performance.

Many young men have entered what looked like mediocre jobs with just this hope in their hearts. Many a young engineer has framed his sheepskin and taken a trucking or a foundry job in the expectation of proving that he was capable of advancement.

Sometimes this has been profitable. They may have stayed at the bottom of the ladder too long ever to reach its top, but at least they are on hand if promotions are in order.

Even the filling station is, in theory, only the first step to a fine position as chemical engineer, general manager, or even president of the organization. The great oil company quoted in the previous chapter asserts that "In our various major plants the company offers a relatively large number of courses

for the benefit of all employees regardless of service or educational background. Such courses assist employees in further preparing themselves to take advantage of the many opportunities offered under our policy of promoting from the ranks. Under this policy, and with the assistance of similar courses, the young men on filling station jobs are offered the same opportunity to advance. Many of our positions of higher responsibility have been and will continue to be filled by those who have had their start on these and similar bottom jobs."

Still, Jed Morehouse atop a Great Smoky mountain, and that lad with the ears-wide grin in a tiny South Carolina mill-town, probably won't have much chance to avail themselves of these manifold courses and opportunities. And many filling stations and ten-cent stores still are making a bachelor's degree a prerequisite to a job!

However, business is again opening its doors to youth.

General Electric has engaged about two hundred young men from among the 1935 college graduates, two-thirds of them from engineering courses and one-third from arts and business courses. In its clerical and stenographic force, it is employing young people without previous experience. It has no waiting list of older employees in this group any longer.

Harold Amberg, vice-president and general counsel of the First National Bank in Chicago, recently went downstairs on what he thought was the hopeless errand of finding a place for a young woman, a friend of a friend. To his surprise he learned that there were three available jobs in this vast institution. He learned that there were signs of movement, of people leaving for better posts, of promotions, and consequent vacancies in the ranks of banking employees.

The placement officers of New York state's fine Vocational Guidance for Juniors find calls coming in for more *good* and



qualified young folks than they have. They are working far into the night in their efforts to find the right person for each post.

Scouts from great commercial and industrial houses have popped up again on college and university campuses, welcome as the first crocus.

At the University of North Carolina, the textile school placed almost all of its crop of 1935 graduates. The university placement office presented its lists to the Eastman Kodak Company, the International Machines Corporation, Vick Chemical, and a number of insurance companies who wanted men with personality and background for salesmen, for office work, and for travelling jobs. The W. T. Grant department store was hunting men who might work up to management.

The University of Chicago has seen the best recruiting season since 1930, according to John Kennon, in charge of the placement office. He has greeted representatives of firms he hadn't seen in five years, including Procter and Gamble, the Ditto Corporation, Bauer and Black, Marshall Field and Company, Burroughs Adding Machines, several rubber companies, a number of banks, some of the Federal agencies such as the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, and the Federal Housing Administration—and even J. P. Morgan and Company! Moreover, salaries have increased, he tells us. The average this year is ninety-seven dollars against eighty-two dollars last year. These two schools are typical. The University of California's employment office tells the same story, and adds that the names of many alumni applicants for anything that might come in have been erased from their lists. Most great and small schools can amplify this picture.

Business and vocational schools tell us they too are placing

more of their students. The Frank Wiggins Trade School in Los Angeles found work for 74 per cent of those qualified, an increase of 44 per cent over last year.

We might reasonably assume, might we not, that although the boys and girls of this generation have lost time even as soldiers in the World War lost their good years, still the future gleams bright before them?

Alas, this is not always the case.

When firms want young men, they want just that. They want this year's crop of high-school and college graduates, not those grown stale in storage. A man twenty-six or -seven years old is too mature to train. A lad of twenty-two or -three would look silly as a messenger, to a bank's clients. The ones they have kept on are embarrassment enough!

Notice that when Mr. Vandaleur finally places Dirk Conway in a more suitable job, he won't hire Dirk's pal who has been driving a tinkly wagon around the streets selling "Chocolate Good Humors." He'll take on another bright youngster, fresh from high school.

General Electric didn't take into its fold two hundred 1932 graduates who have been praying for such an opportunity; it took young men of the 1935 vintage.

When newspapers need cub reporters, they want cubs in years, as well as experience.

Advertising agencies want boys and girls with the ink still damp on their diplomas. When Batton, Barton, Durstine, and Osborn consider a young person the chief requirement, Mr. Feland says, is that "the applicant shall have distinguished himself in school or college by some type of work that would indicate an aptitude for some advertising effort. For example, one who had become the editor of a college paper and done a

good job at it might be supposed to have some promise as a writer; and one who had been a business manager of the same paper might be useful on the selling or management side of advertising."

Somehow, to most people, this season's college paper is vital and fresh this year. The year before last's editions are apt to appear amateurish and out-dated. They are not so impressive a record as next week's edition. And the boy or girl who edited it is apt to have forgotten his technique. His ideas haven't bubbled while he was waiting table in a restaurant.

Business men do not like newcomers who are not extremely young for other reasons. They are afraid that, being older, they will want quicker advancement, and leave them for better jobs as quickly as possible. Then the executives must fill their places and begin all over again.

In Los Angeles last summer a panel of business men gathered to discuss this very problem. They all agreed they still want and badly need young blood. The president of a bank, however, told his story to the gathering: A college graduate, a friend of one of the banker's own sons, came and applied for a position. "We start people in as messengers at eighty dollars a month," the gentleman told him. The young man, who had been supporting his wife and a five months' old baby as time-keeper in a canning factory, announced with enthusiasm that he'd like that. He was sent back to the canning factory, however, because the banker refused, saying, "You'd get a better job in a few months and leave. We want people we're sure will be permanent."

Moreover, many firms fear that older boys and girls will not be satisfied with small salaries for long. They will demand

more increases than they are prepared to give, within a shorter time. They will want to marry, and will use their acquired value as a lever for fatter pay checks, and will become discontented and inefficient if they do not receive them.

Little of this holds water, of course, in the face of the facts. It is true that technically trained men and women forget their academically acquired knowledge if they have no opportunity to put it into practice. A young person who has been either out of work or travelling down a dead-end street is only too happy to go to work at his preferred occupation, or in any opening that offers interest, an opportunity to use his or her abilities, and a chance for progress. He'd probably be at least as hard-working, far more patient, and infinitely more thankful for the chance than a bright young thing still green with campus-grass stain.

Few executives consider this, we notice. They have preconceived ideas of what constitutes young blood, just as they have fixed notions of their God-given economic rights; ideas as strongly rooted as the Harvard elms.

Mr. Cyrus Ching, president of the United States Rubber Company, who is as honest as he is in general liberal, says frankly, "People on the better jobs have been slowed up in salary increases and in promotion. It will be, I think, about four years before this situation is remedied. For young people, we are taking this year's crop. I'm terribly afraid the others are out of luck."

This then is the situation: There's hope and chance for the younger boys and girls, those who were fortunate enough to stay in school through the depression years, or who had the good luck to be born at a time that leads them to make their high-school valedictories this year or next year.

So unless something actually does turn up, Tom Cary

Stonehill will go on teaching dancing. Grant, the gently reared Mississippi fire fighter will probably continue to answer fire alarms. The young lover in the Little Rock filling station will continue to pump gasoline and check batteries, and dream of an M.D.

The clouds are parting, but the sun's warmth falls on their young brothers and sisters. Many of the older ones are, as Mr. Ching says, forever out of luck.

### *Chapter Three*

## IN THE FIELDS

IN THE TWO preceding chapters, we've been seeking to find out what commerce and industry have to offer our young men and women. We've asked whether or not the office, the factory, the laboratory wants them.

With farming, it's another question altogether. Here the problem is not whether the land wants them, but whether they will stay close to the soil. Whether they will plow the wheat fields, cultivate the corn rows, fatten cattle and send oranges and spinach to the city markets. For, as it has been pointed out to us over and over again, farming is not only a way of life ; it is a source of life.

As that lad on his hay-wagon rostrum near Marengo, Iowa, told us, we can't eat our cheap cars and our typewriters. Nor is a chiffon dance dress, however distracting, as nourishing as a sizzling crisp pork chop. We need to keep our boys and girls down on the farm.

We are not going to discuss here the economic problems of price-raising for agricultural products. We are not going into the reasons for the relative difference in the cash returns for a bushel of wheat and a pair of new shoes. We are going to leave the complexities of the AAA and subsequent substitutes to the economists and the politicians. That's all in the newspapers every day.

We are interested here in the attitude of the rural boy and girl to farm life. For, as Theodore Roosevelt said so aptly, good crops are of little value to a farmer unless they open the door to a good kind of life on the farm.

There were about thirteen and a half million young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-nine on the farms, according to the 1930 census. That constituted a quarter of our rural population—and we note that that census was taken before the depression drove many young men and women back home to the old folks in the country.

We all know boys and girls who left the land to come to the city. Most of us know the reasons, too. Naturally, the city is glamorous. In the glittering 1920's, you could make tremendous wages. Detroit's automobile factories looked like rainbow's end to lads who were already feeling the pinch of the poverty which fell on farming long before it spread to the cities.

City work is easier. It doesn't take so many hours. There's time for movies, and dances and a swim all the year round at the "Y". There's all that fun waiting for you any time at all, too.

Homes are more comfortable; there's usually electric light and running water in town, and there are always plenty of people to talk to without having to go very far.

A good many had to give up these attractions when they had no more money to secure them. And then, when times were better, the more venturesome went back. When the automobile business began to boom again, they contributed to an actual housing shortage in Detroit!

We find more young men whose families own their farms willing to make agriculture their lifetime occupations than others. An interesting study directed by Mary E. Frayser on

the attitudes of high-school seniors toward farming and other vocations, under the auspices of the South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station of Clemson Agricultural College showed that in 1932 31.7 per cent of the sons of white farmers interrogated named farming as their choice of work. But a re-check in 1935 showed 44.3 per cent engaged in agriculture.

Relief administrators, according to E. L. Kirkpatrick at the University of Wisconsin's College of Agriculture, tell the same story. From them we learn that the minority of young people in New England are looking to farming as a life work. Most of those who meet in 4-H club leadership and other camps expect to continue farming on the land already within the family rather than to start out on a new venture.

About the only ones in New York state who are at all interested in starting farming are those who will inherit the home farm, or who can work it with a father and mother, or a brother and sister, sharing it.

Not many rural young people in Kentucky are asking for help to start farming. Many do not want to farm.

At the University of Nebraska we learn that only a very small percentage of the boys and girls come with the idea of going back to the farm. They hope to teach, or learn some profession or business.

In the State College of Agriculture, too, the students do not want to learn to farm. They'd rather engage in some related occupation, such as making farm machinery, ice creams, working on farm experimental stations, acting as extension agents, and so on.

Still, there are plenty of good sturdy young people out on the land. Meet George Monroe. George is twenty-two years old, blond, clean-cut, determined. He's a student at the



Kansas State College at Manhattan, and he is also a farmer. He farms four hundred acres of his father's wheat near Lyon, and pays him the going tenant-rate: one-third the share of the crop. Early in the fall, before going off to college, George hired a man and put in his wheat. Toward the end of June, right after school is out, he'll go back to his farm, oil up his combine, and harvest. With two hired helpers, that'll take ten days or two weeks. After that, he'll plow over the land and leave it until he plants again in September. Last summer he crammed in six weeks at military camp at Fort Washington; the summer before that he worked on a country newspaper.

"Sometimes I clear two hundred dollars a year, and sometimes sixteen or eighteen hundred," he tells us. "You never know. But I'm handy with machinery, and that saves me a lot of money. Some of these farmers put too much money into tractors and expensive equipment. I pick it up used. Haywire is cheap, and you can repair almost anything with it."

Young chaps like George are thick as sunflowers in Kansas, particularly in the eastern part of the state where the land is good and there's plenty of rain. Out where Edy and Joe Balch live, in western Kansas, are the great farms, the great droughts, and the great desolation and valiant efforts. These practical, successful young folks, however, are usually the sons and daughters of farmers who themselves have made a success of their land.

Iowa is different from western Kansas and western Nebraska, and the Dakotas. But it is typical of the rich areas of Wisconsin, parts of Minnesota, eastern Kansas, and Nebraska, and portions of Illinois. Iowa, however, did not suffer the great trek to the cities in the twenties. So there wasn't much

of a change in the thirties. Otherwise it is representative. We will therefore examine it specifically.

Iowa was an aggravatingly complacent place in the last decade. It was as fat with prosperity as a hog ready for the market. The lean years shook it out of that complacency. It isn't satisfied with the *status quo*. This is having a definite effect on the young people there.

In the first place, ten per cent of the entire farm land is owned by corporations, such as insurance companies and banks.

In the second place, tenancy has increased. About three-fifths of all the farms in Iowa are worked by tenant farmers. Many a family which lost its land is now making its living as tenants on the old homestead.

Consequently, we find sharp disillusionment among the youth of the state as to the value of the ownership of land. We observe a definite sense of insecurity among them, despite the sentimentalists who assure us that young men know the soil is something stable to tie to. They don't.

They know that in 1929 the people of the richest farm state in the country received less than a fifth of the total income of the state of Iowa. In the years from 1931 through 1933, their share was even less. That's when Iowa had its bumper crop of foreclosures.

A sense of instability is inherently foreign to the farmer. It has to be. It's all very well for the city dweller to live for today, with his insurance policies and his grade-A gilt-edged widow-and-orphan-quality stocks and bonds as his guarantee for future existence—his problem of doing his work well this day, this week, this month uppermost in his mind. On the land, it's different.

Your farmer thinks in terms of years when he sets up a

farm. A cattle cycle is fourteen years; a hog cycle is six or eight years. You can't have much of a farm without a wife. Children are a great help. The comfortable family in this state averages about four children, somewhat above the stable population quota.

On the farm, then, a sense of insecurity, of uncertainty, is as much a calamity as grasshoppers or drought.

This insecurity manifests itself in two distinct groups. The first are the young people who say, "Let's get out of this. There's nothing in farming but a lot of hard work and no fun at all."

The other, and more important element, feels it has an obligation to the country to feed it. It has a genuine love of the land, and is seriously disturbed about the future of farmers and of farming. It does not want to drop into mere peasantry—which it feels is its future if urban corporations own the land and pay a pittance to those operating it.

These intelligent young country people out here hold that the nation will suffer if they sell the very fertility of their soil. Preservation of the land, they feel, is a matter of the public, as well as their personal, good. They hear of control of petroleum supplies. Why not the land? It's a public issue, they are convinced of it. There were eleven million acres under cultivation in Iowa; and experts have told them they cannot keep it good for growing if they set out more than nine million acres.

Like their fathers and their grandfathers, they are emotionally opposed to crop reduction. Intellectually, they accept it as an alternative to exporting. We hear, again and again, the statement that if America persists in her high-tariff policy, agriculture will have to shrink, and the city people who are

flourishing under duties on the things they make will simply have to pay more for bread and butter.

They cannot understand why city people don't realize this. We're too polite to remind them that the farm belt has been the backbone of the high-protection Republican Party for a good many years. Anyhow, they didn't have anything to do with it, and why criticize their parents?

The Agricultural Adjustment Act helped, though crudely and ineptly. As a result of the corn-hog program, other phases of the farm are improving. The stock is cared for more regularly. The weeds are pulled from the road, and clipped from between the corn and the fences. There's more concern for fruit trees and lawns. People are living more pleasantly.

This bit of less harried living makes tenantry a much-discussed problem. The young people want to own their land, naturally. If they can't, they don't want to slave in peasant-like conditions so that stockholders in Los Angeles and Buffalo can buy fur coats and golf clubs. They tend to ask that these rented farm homes have running water and electricity, and a few of the modern conveniences the corporation directors could not imagine being without. This would make the landlord's income less, but it would make the farm more attractive, for after better prices, the next thing all the rural boys and girls we meet demand are better living conditions.

The farm home is more barren of comfort than most of us city folk realize. Only a year ago this writer visited some capable farm women in a neighborhood within less than an hour's walk of Dowagiac, Michigan, itself about a three and a half hours' drive from Chicago. The people in this community were agog with excitement. They were going to have electricity. The big household issues then were whether

they'd install a kitchen pump, or an electric refrigerator, or a shiny enamelled stove with all those remarkable tricks, for each family on the route had to agree to buy some unit of electrical equipment before the lines were strung. Just lamp connections weren't enough!

Many of these homes had no inside toilets; they had no sewage; they had no running water. Water was pumped from the well and brought into the house as it had been years and years ago.

There are many many of these meagre farm homes in this country. We ourselves, bred as we are from generations of city dwellers, are astonished. The women work so hard they have little time for flower gardens, or for the small details of gracious living. The culture and the information and the alert interest they display in the outside world seems to us incredible when we see what efforts are required to attain them.

Education, both in the schools and sent direct to the home by the state colleges in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture has made a great difference, and undoubtedly will do more to make life more livable and more pleasant.

Diversified farming and truck-gardening has developed by leaps and bounds during the depression.

Moreover, people have had more nutritious food to eat. It is a strange and sad fact that during the prosperous years farmers sent their produce to the market. They sent their milk to the cities and their children grew dwarfed and nervous on coffee. In general, agricultural counties had a greater percentage of malnutrition than urban centers, according to a conference on malnutrition called by the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor in the fall of 1933. When farmers

couldn't get much money for their commodities, they fed them to the families. Children went to school with patched pants and rosy cheeks. This wasn't always true in the good years.

Times have changed that.

Automobiles, radios, good roads, and better prices have made the country more attractive. Still, it's necessary that the nation as a whole makes it worth while for the country boy and girl to be happy down on the farm. As these boys and girls are feeling their political oats, they will probably force us to, whether we like it or not! \*

\*I acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Dr. T. W. Schultz of Iowa State College at Ames, and to W. W. Waymack, editor of the *Des Moines Register* for assisting me in clarifying these trends.

## *Chapter Four*

### WITH WILLING HANDS

LET'S HAVE a look at the opportunities offered by a few other occupations. We can't run down the census list of them; it's impossible. But let's check hastily over a few more.

Dr. Lubin tells us that the great pick-up in employment has come in the so-called service and consumer industries.

Here's a happy hunting ground for boys and girls. If Ethel has forgotten how to wave permanently Indian-straight tresses in the years when women were rolling their own on kid and wire worms at night, why she need not worry. There are new methods now anyhow; she can learn them without too much trouble. If she is skillful and willing, it won't matter that she isn't so young as she was when she first learned to call a curling iron by its technical name.

If Adolph likes the cleaning and dyeing business, he can probably get a good job, marry, and live happily ever after. With the improvement in general conditions, wives are giving up their thrifty dipping in gasoline in the back yard, and calling up the neighborhood cleaning shop instead. They never had very good luck at it anyhow, and the scent of gasoline was always more enduring than the odor of sanctity.

If Jimmy has a gift for gardening, and his prices aren't too high, he'll find plenty of homes with lawns and flowerbeds that need to be pruned and seeded and bonemealed and generally coddled. Rose bushes that are pining to be moved into

a sunny corner; lupin to be nursed, and dahlias to be pampered like the prima donnas they are. The country has become garden-conscious, thanks to the garden clubs of America, and lots of ambitious folk need professional cooperation.

The laundry business is bubbling like good soapsuds. We're enchanted at their ebullience. One in our town bobbed up with the announcement that it washes everything but the baby.

Here and there we meet young folks who have taken full advantage of this. In Port Washington there are a dozen people servicing oil burners. Five years ago you had to wait until the store which sold you yours got around to you.

Some ingenious lads earn a living house-breaking dogs, at a dollar a day for each puppy.

In San Francisco some girls earn a comparatively comfortable income supplying and arranging flowers for doctors' offices. We could cite a number of similar experiments.

There is, apparently, no limit to the number of things people are glad to have you do for them. And youth or age is no handicap. Capacity and ingenuity are the only requirements.

This is something, as we have remarked, that has come trotting around the corner on the heels of prosperity. One occupation, however, has had a great boom in the depression. This is domestic service, which grew like a toadstool, flourishing in a dark, damp, unhealthy atmosphere.

Now this is by way of being a major occupation, for, according to the Woman's Bureau of the Department of Labor, in October 1934 it employs over 1,400,000 women.

American women, especially white women, have never liked domestic service. It carries with it a curious social



stigma, though why a girl who earns say, fifteen dollars a week plus her board and room, should be regarded as inferior to one who works in a factory for considerably less, we cannot imagine.

Moreover, hours in household work are long and irregular, and in all except large establishments which have servants' dining and sitting rooms, the conditions are usually far from attractive.

The years from 1930 to 1935 have not improved any of this. When they found themselves jobless, many inexperienced girls and women, driven by their need, were willing to work under almost any circumstances offered. With this overcrowding of the labor market, standards of employment fell, with resulting reductions in pay, vacation and time off, and housing comfort and convenience.

Often housewives who never had any servants at all, or at best a "char" once or twice a week, leaped at the opportunity to employ a girl for nothing more than her room and table-leavings. These rooms were, and still are, frequently in the attic, under the eaves, where it boils in summer and freezes in the winter; or else in a dank basement closet. There is too rarely a private bath, and usually infrequent, if any access to the family tub.

Very young girls have been particularly victimized by women who do not for an instant regard themselves as cruel or exploiting employers. We see frail slaveys, who ought to be in school, struggling with heavy ash-cans, cooking for large families, taking care of the baby, doing all the mending and darning, and the heavy as well as the lighter washing.

This isn't mere observation only, or hearsay. Here's the result of a questionnaire and a survey made by the Young Women's Christian Association in Richmond among those of

its own members engaged in domestic service. These girls are, on the whole, quite superior types.

The average working week, the survey showed, is 71.6 hours, and the average wage is eight dollars and seven cents.

All of the girls reporting live at their employers' home. Half of them have their own bathrooms; and half have access to the family bath.

Not one of them said she was paid for overtime. None seemed to have any idea what that might be!

Their bi-weekly "time off" varies from ten in the morning, three in the afternoon to "whenever I'm through."

Most of them don't know whether they may ever have any or part of the eight legal holidays for themselves; nor are they ever sure whether they are to have an annual vacation, with or without pay; or even whether they are to be paid their regular wages when they are sick for less than a week. Few are certain that they will be given any notice of dismissal.

Only in Wisconsin is there any regulation or standards for household labor, and here it applies only to wages. In this state the minimum wage of girls and women working fifty or more hours a week is \$4.25 if both room and board are furnished, and \$6.00 if only board is furnished. The hourly basis ranges from sixteen cents an hour for minors from fourteen years with no previous experience to twenty-two and a half cents after six months' experience in cities with a population of five thousand or more. If the housewife is delinquent, the Industrial Commission will sue her, promptly and effectively!

In an effort to find out what standards are being used by employment agencies, the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor sent out 388 questionnaires, and received 217 replies. These came from college, university, and secondary

school placement offices, Y.W.C.A. branches, both public and fee-charging private agencies, and other social and philanthropic organizations.

Only fifteen agencies in ten states reported standards of placing women over twenty-one, and nineteen agencies in ten states reported standards for young girls under that age. Only forty-three colleges and universities out of sixty-four provided usable information about conditions required for students working their way through school.

The minimum wage varied from thirteen to forty dollars a month, with food and lodging included. Hours of work generally were not specified, and a private room was demanded by nine of the standards that applied to full-time workers. Many agencies recommend certain conditions before placement, but they cannot enforce them; there is no backing in law or morality. A woman who would never think of short-changing the grocer is incredibly inconsiderate in her treatment of her maid, taking time, effort, and energy she doesn't pay for.

Of course, there are few standards for service among the girls themselves. Domestic-science courses in schools, with their emphasis on food values, vitamins, and whatnot, are much too high brow.

Sometimes, we find them trying to raise their calling to a more dignified level by training. Up in Concord, Massachusetts, some public-spirited people rented a house and took thirty girls to teach. The Junior Employment Service, in co-operation with the Y.W.C.A. went to a group of housewives and said, "If you'll map out the things you'll put your maids to doing, we'll train them." So the women discussed, and made suggestions. The girls then learned to scrub, dust, run the vacuum cleaner, and to do many of the things a woman

fidgets and fusses over with new "help." These girls all got satisfactory jobs.

In all fairness, we must add that it is also true in a number of instances that when gentlewomen went "into service" during the past years, by their own quality of personality, they commanded respect, and so raised the social level of this occupation to a limited extent.

This also holds for young men. We used to laugh, but with more than a little sympathy, at Russian noblemen driving taxicabs and opening apartment-house doors and ushering theatregoers to their amusements in this country after the Russian Revolution. But we respected them, and many housewives do respect the girls who would rather work in their kitchens than sit home on a relief ration.

At all events, housework offers a means of livelihood, if young girls want it. It's there.

So is taxi and motorbus driving for young men. They have taken to this way of earning their living. For many, it has been nothing more than a stopgap, like filling stations. One large mid-Western bus line counts over sixty per cent of college graduates among its uniformed employees.

Forestry and soil-erosion work are fascinating and adventurous new ways of working, developed greatly by the Roosevelt Administration activities. The President has made the nation forestry-minded. There are not nearly enough men equipped for this calling. But there may soon be too many, what with the CCC camps, the soil-erosion service, not to mention the lure it has in the colleges. Enrollment in forestry courses has skyrocketed. Some educators fear that there will soon be an eruption of technicians, as there was of petroleum engineers in the days when oil was flowing gold.

There is also an emotional interest in social work. Schools

of social service, and social-science courses in the colleges and universities have been packed. Most relief administrators and heads of social agencies are sure that our social problems are with us for a long while to come, and that there is a real shortage of trained workers. Here then is a satisfying and wide-open field.

Coal mining is improving, but it has such a long way to go that few young men in their right mind, outside sons of miners, or dwellers by necessity in mining communities, would choose it.

Gold mining, on the other hand, has picked up. We ourselves see an amusing evidence of it.

Our climb up the side of an Arizona mountain is perilous. Not because of any defects in the marvellously engineered roads, but because the vistas of endless majesty take our eyes and our minds off the gray ribbon ahead.

"Those terrific crags put us in our place," we're reflecting this day. "The New Deal and the Square Deal and Sixteen-to-One are as a rock rolling down that precipice. . . . Surely the men who live in their shadows must see things as they are."

Right here we stall our motor in surprise. Pasted up against a turquoise and black cliff is posted an enormous warning,

THIS DISTRICT IS ON STRIKE. DON'T SCAB.

Thus jolted from infinity, we tumble into Oatman.

Oatman is a gold-mine village. A ghost town that has taken on substance, thanks to a monetary policy evolved in Washington. And Oatman is on strike. We learn that immediately from men hanging around Honolulu Jim's place. The mine, mill, and smelter workers in the famous old Tom Reed and Big Jim mines are out. We notice that they are many of

them young fellows too, romantic with their cork helmets and tanned faces.

Once upon a time, in the boom days of 1914 and 1916, the Tom Reed and the Big Jim were paying the biggest wages around here. Then the ore sort of petered out. People drifted away from Oatman. It came to life only on Saturday nights when the railroad men came over from Needles and Kingman to drink and dance in the big open-air pavilion, perched shakily on the side of the mountain, and so old and uncertain we're sure a kick by an irritated merry-maker would knock it all down.

Then the price of gold went up, and the mines re-opened. Like magic all the old-timers around and a lot of these young new-timers came to town. When we arrive, they're striking because the miners are getting only \$4.50 and the muckers \$4.00 a day, and they feel they should have a dollar a day more.

"You know how it is, lady," remarked a young fellow whose eyes twinkled as he stopped his argument with a stubble-chinned oldster outside the Arizona Hotel. "You know the President, I suppose,"—he too has drawn conclusions from our license plates. "Ain't he told you how wealth oughta be distributed in wages? Well, he's got the idea, only we gotta help him carry it out."

Other kinds of miners won't help Mr. Roosevelt, however. Copper mines are working their men on a slim part-time basis, if they are open at all, although there is a noticeable increase in demand and production. There's still a surplus of copper in this country, and this is practically an imperishable metal, capable of being used over and over again. With new low-cost producing methods, such as those employed by the Utah Copper Company, and with new and huge low-cost mines in

Rhodesia, the future isn't bright. Dr. Lubin tells us that all employment in production of nonferrous metals is 78 per cent compared to 100 per cent in the years 1923 to 1925, but the pay rolls are only 59 per cent of that peak period.

Moreover, 23 per cent of the men engaged in bronze and brass are unemployed today ; and smelting, refining of copper, lead, and zinc finds 20 per cent of its labor jobless. Pay rolls in all these pursuits are extremely low. Men are working often only one or two days a week. In Utah alone three thousand families are stranded in the mining areas, relief administrators tell us.

The great western cattle ranches suffered frightfully from the drought. They'll come back. They do not, however, employ many men, and as a career cattle-ranching is grand as it is practically exclusive.

If Horace Greeley were called upon to give good advice today, he undoubtedly wouldn't know what to say.

## *Chapter Five*

### IN THE PROFESSIONS

LIKE ALICE in the White Rabbit's house, the professions will soon be bumping their heads against the ceiling, with one leg up the chimney and one arm out of the window. But there seems to be no little cake marked "eat me" which will even stop their prodigious growth, much less reduce their size.

This observation was made by the secretary of the National Conference of Bar Examiners about the law. But it holds quite as well in the other professions.

Let us see the situation in teaching. We've all heard the stories of the effects of the depression on school teachers. And teachers are important to us, not only because of their place in the life of every child, but because of their numbers. There are about a million employees of the nation's public schools. Education accounts for over one-third of all public employees, and for more than three per cent of the nation's workers. There are more teachers in this country than there are carpenters, miners, machinists, bookkeepers, physicians, or lawyers.

On January 8, 1934, the United States Office of Education estimated that 200,000 certified teachers were unemployed. There were at that date—and conditions haven't changed since then—some 24,000 fewer teaching positions than in 1932, and the number of trained candidates for the available positions has definitely increased.



Now nobody ever went into education to make a fortune. The average annual salary for all teachers, principals, and supervisors during the last ten years has ranged from \$1,222 to \$1,440, according to statements made by the National Education Association.

Highly paid teachers are rare. In 1926, when salaries were at about the same average level as at present, less than one per cent of all school teachers and executives received over four thousand dollars, and less than two per cent received over \$3,300. At the lower end of the scale, over 15 per cent received less than seven hundred dollars, and nearly 40 per cent earned less than one thousand.

We see what this means: The NEA estimates that one teacher in every three is now paid less than \$750 a year. In other words, about 250,000 teachers, entrusted with the education of some seven million children, receive annual wages below the minimum for factory hands, as described by the "blanket code" of the National Recovery Administration.

This gives them no opportunity to save against old age, illness, and unemployment. Furthermore, the lowest-paid teachers are not covered by retirement provisions. Of the eleven states paying the lowest average salaries to teachers, only one has a state-wide teacher retirement law in operation.

That is the darkest side, and undoubtedly it looks about as discouraging as anything could possibly be.

However, there is a silver lining. In the first place, the youngest and least qualified teachers are in greatest demand, because of the low salaries. Thus young people have a chance to instruct the Three R's in a great many of the nation's little red schoolhouses, if they don't need much to eat and their shoes are good and sturdy.

In the second place, according to NEA officials, while there

are many unemployed people today with teaching certificates, nearly all educational leaders agree that there is an actual shortage of well-qualified teachers. The overcrowding during the depression was complicated by the fact that many teachers who had quit the profession because of marriage, or for more profitable jobs in business during the heyday of prosperity were trying to find places in schools again.

With better times, that condition is changing. Married women who don't have to work as a rule don't want to, despite the prevailing opinion to the contrary.

Married women at work were blamed for the depression. They were taking all the jobs. Nowadays we find them blamed because young men and women can't find employment. We always wonder what the average person thinks is so seductive in the picture of a woman arising in the chill dawn, getting the family breakfast, marching the children off to school, making the beds, cleaning, washing the dishes, leaving the children's lunch, and rushing off to office or factory of eight hours; then marketing, cooking, dishwashing, mending, and so to bed before another of these exciting days!

We ourselves find most married women leaving their jobs as soon as their husbands are able to carry the family load. This is as true of teaching as it is of any other feminine employment.

While wives and mothers were crowding back into the schools, recent college graduates were also competing for educational posts. A great many of them regarded the school-room exactly as others did the filling station: as a stopgap until times improved. Unfortunately for the older and better trained teachers, many found themselves superseded by these youngsters, for the depression did not operate solely to keep out of employment in the schools either ill-qualified teachers

or those who actually did not belong to the profession. A great many of them, failing to find better berths, are staying.

There is, however, a growing demand for better educated teachers. Now that the educational crisis has passed, communities are coming to demand better material. Sometimes they are even paying a little more for it. We see men and women returning to the colleges and universities for degrees because there is a real demand for them.

There is a trend toward change in teaching methods, in the curricula of the public schools of a number of states, as we shall see in another chapter. This means that boys and girls who have been learning something about the so-called "progressive education" and the "integrated curriculum," as taught in a number of the teachers' colleges, will find openings.

Moreover, youth is not in such demand in education as it is in business. A girl or boy qualified to teach, who has kept abreast of the times, is not handicapped by several years of unemployment. The ability to teach, after all, is not only a matter of training and technical knowledge; it involves such intangibles as personality, understanding, human sympathy, and great tact, all of which are increased rather than diminished by time, however that time is occupied.

This does not hold, of course, in the colleges, where the greatest scholars are the most respected and most highly paid members of the faculty. But it does obtain in the public-school system.

Moreover, there is a growing interest in trade and commercial schools. Thus young men and women who keep their technical equipment, or succeed in re-training in these fields, and who are blessed with these natural endowments, have a definite opportunity in the future.

There are, of course, certain objectives which we, as members of society and concerned with the stability of the public schools, the very cornerstone of our democracy, should consider seriously. Teaching needs to be more stable. Teacher-tenure laws might help. An income which attracts capable people into their proper place in the public schools is a consummation devoutly to be desired. The Little Red Schoolhouse, to this writer's mind, is more important than the great university. Yet the pay is so low that as soon as a young woman improves, she moves on to town, and thence to city, and on into institutions of higher learning, or into private schools.

A sound retirement system which would enable school authorities to retire teachers after their years of usefulness have passed would appreciably improve education, as well as open opportunities for young graduates. The removal of school appointments from the realm of politics and personal influence would be a boon to the nation.

So much for teaching. Now let us look at the law. There is no such statistical basis for judging the legal profession as there is in the school system.

We hear on every hand that the bar is overcrowded. Before we see exactly what has been happening to lawyers, let us have the opinion of Lloyd K. Garrison, dean of the Law School at the University of Wisconsin.

In his exhaustive survey of the Wisconsin Bar, printed first in the *Wisconsin Law Review*, Dean Garrison says, "In Wisconsin since 1880 the volume of legal business and the opportunities for lawyers have increased much more rapidly than the increase either of lawyers or of the population. Even allowing for the contraction in 1933, the position of the lawyer

today with relation to the need of the community for his services is more favorable than at any time prior to 1932.

"I know," he admits, "that this conclusion will be received with skepticism, especially by the lawyers, the great majority of whom have seen their incomes dwindle since the beginning of the depression. . . . The lawyers have probably suffered no more than the doctors and probably not as much as most of those in other occupations.

"What I am concerned with for the moment is not what the community can afford to pay for lawyers, but how much the community needs and uses lawyers. If the conclusion which I have drawn" (from tables presented) "is correct, there is considerable room in the profession for young men who are graduating from our law schools, even though they cannot expect much in income for the time being.

"They are of course having a very hard time to get paying jobs, and will continue to face this difficulty until the incomes of lawyers begin to increase. But that their services are needed is shown by the fact that they find very little difficulty in getting jobs in law offices at no salary or at a nominal salary, even while in law school, and that there is plenty of work for them to do in these positions."

In further discussing the survey, Dean Garrison also points out that even it has not taken into account "the enormous growth in recent times in the number and activity of administrative tribunals, which have unquestionably increased the business of lawyers; nor has any reference been made to the rapid multiplication of federal and state laws affecting business at every turn and calling insistently for interpretation and advice to clients."

In short, this jurist feels warranted in his conclusion that

the business of lawyers has been increasing at least as rapidly as the profession.

The profession is undoubtedly increasing. It is growing like Mr. Finney's turnip. There are 150,000 lawyers in the United States, and 50,000 potential attorneys now enrolled in the law schools.

What has happened to the depression crop? A survey of unemployment conditions among young lawyers in California, made by the Research Secretary of the Committee of Bar Examiners of that state is as good a diagram as we can find.

A questionnaire was sent to 1,466 lawyers, that is, every person admitted to practice, except on motion, during the years 1929, 1930, and 1931. A total of 1,182 young men answered them, an 80 per cent response, one of the best returns ever made to a state-wide questionnaire to members of a profession.

The reasons why these young men took up the cudgels for justice rambles over a wide range, from "natural desire and ambition," to the fact that a parent or a near relative was an attorney, or they had been influenced by their parents. Some said they had entered their profession on advice of attorneys; some because of preferences of fiancées; still others were attracted by the financial advantages of the professions; the advantages of a knowledge of law in various commercial fields; social advantages; interest in forensics, desire for justice for everybody; observation of lack of education in many attorneys; and a desire to better the conditions of the bar in California. Some few of them chose it after trying two other professions; and one went into the bar after proving to himself he was unfit in other fields because "lack of ability in a lawyer needs no excuse."

How did these potential Gladstones survive the holocaust

of the early 1930's? During the first year, 51 per cent had been unable to support themselves or their dependents. In the second year, 37 per cent were earning insufficient income for subsistence; and in the third year, 33 per cent.

One hundred and fifty-six of this group stated that their present income as attorneys was more than their annual income prior to admission to the bar, whereas 250 stated it was less.

Now what about their actual dollar incomes? The average income of all who answered the question, "What was your net professional income during the first year of practice?" was \$978. But this is a high average because of the fact that a few individuals had incomes as great as \$10,000. However, in 71 per cent of the group, not one had earned more than \$1,000 and over a hundred reported their first year's income as \$200 or less. During the second year, the average income increased to \$1,602, but again it was raised to this level because a few made as much as \$15,000, while 42 per cent of the group earned \$1,000 or less. In the third year the 42 per cent were still unable to report an increase of income, though the average increased. Only five had a net income of \$5,000. A minute number at the top seem to do well, but what about the 42 per cent unable to earn even a subsistence in a profession that demands of its members a higher standard of living than a trade or even a business?

Over the country many of them have been forced into some other form of activity. This has been especially true of the generation with which we are concerned.

What hope is there for these young men?

It is said that a lawyer learns more during his first two years of practice than he does in college. He has, then, lost a great deal if he has not been able to practice.

Still, the law is not a series of incantations. There is no hocus-pocus about it. If a lad is not discouraged and keeps brushed up while he's driving a bus or selling patent kitchen utensils, he won't lose what he has learned. He may become rusty, but he needn't lose his learning.

Youth is no especial asset to an attorney. Clients are better satisfied with maturity than with lack of it. Thus, while the bar, on the face of it, seems jammed as an uptown New York subway at five-thirty of a working day, there seems to be hope for the fit.

There has been, as we've seen, a deplorable number who have made less than a living, and many of whom had to give up their profession. They may come back, with the upturn of business, if they really want to, we believe. And Dean Garrison has proved that business will need more and more competent legal advice.

All young professional men have suffered as a result of the depression years, but dentists and doctors are not in as fortunate a position as lawyers. Their skill is harder to retain.

Inability to practice has been tragedy for doctors. In the first place, their education has been extremely expensive, ranging from a minimum of \$5,000 to \$10,000 and even more.

The practice of medicine requires more than theory and training; experience is essential to develop judgment. Whereas a briefless lawyer may watch litigation from a courtroom bench in his spare time, if he has any, the doctor without patients has no such opportunity.

We need not look into the future of the medical profession. People are always getting sick, and they need doctors. The increase in the national income means they have more money to call for medical advice. The misfortune of the doctor, fresh



from college or his internship at the beginning or middle of the lean years has been his inability to employ what he has learned, and to learn more. His chances of picking up the threads and going ahead are considerably slimmer.

This holds true, to a large extent for dentistry, with this difference. There are now about 150,000 doctors in the country; there are only 65,000 dentists.

Moreover, a patient with an attack of influenza will probably get over it without professional attention. A woman may have a baby with a minimum of advice and help, or even none at all. People either get well or die. But bad teeth just go on getting worse. Several years of inattention just increases the amount of work for the dentist.

Dr. U. Garfield Rickert, of the University of Michigan's School of Dentistry, tells us that "Due to the depression, there are probably three or four thousand fewer dentists practising now than there were in 1929. There are also fewer students in the dental schools, but this has already begun to change. The dropping off of dental school enrollment was not due to lessened interest but to the tremendous cost of dental education, which is one of the costliest of all trainings in tuition, time, and equipment which the student must purchase while in training."

Dr. Rickert believes the young dentist's future is closely tied to economic recovery. Dental work has never served more than 25 per cent of the people in the past, so the outlook is limited only by ability to lure more patients into that shining torture chamber and to collect the bills afterward.

However, it has been unfortunate for young dentists who could not immediately go to work. Dental work is a matter of pre-eminent skill and experience. We meet dentists who regret teaching dental theory for a year after they won their

degree. They considered the lost time a professional handicap. It is not easy to brush up judgment and manual skill.

The profession has presented financial handicaps from the beginning. Even second-hand equipment cannot be had for less than about four hundred dollars. A young dentist who goes into an office with established practitioners doesn't have to pay for laboratory or reception furnishings. If he starts alone, he does.

The average doctor or dentist today is likely to move into another community from his own home town. The people who have seen him grow up are too apt to see him still in knee pants and breaking windows with baseballs. It takes time to work up a practice. The usual procedure is to join the church, the Elks, or some club, and make friends. After Charlie Smith has discovered that the new dentist didn't hurt either his tooth or his pocketbook very badly, and did a fine job, he tells his friends. In the meantime, however, the young practitioner must be able to live, pay rent, get around.

The wiser young men go into the offices of established men when they can, and do all the work that they don't want to do. It helps to build up a practice.

However, during the past few years, most doctors and dentists have wanted to attend to all the paying patients themselves; there hasn't been a surplus of them.

All of this has given a serious handicap to our generation of young doctors and dentists. As a result many of them have been driven into other means of earning a livelihood.

Whether many of them can come into their chosen profession at this late date is a matter for speculation only. The average practicing doctor or dentist tells us on the one hand that their professions are overcrowded, but that there is always room for really capable and valuable scientists. Un-

questionably men and women in this country are not getting the medical and dental care they need. Those who are not, however, usually cannot afford it.

There is one profession, however, for which there is a real need, where the demand far exceeds the supply. That is the calling of veterinary.

There are not nearly enough veterinaries to take care of the animals who need them. Only recently, the White House itself was looking for a licensed veterinary to look after the animals belonging to the Executive Mansion. They announced the opening; there were no responses. They actually had a difficult time in finding a man for the post.

This is, moreover, a lucrative calling. People with pets are likely to take good care of their animals. Washington veterinaries charge two dollars each time a Scottie with a tummy-ache or a peevish Peke comes to call. Innoculations against distemper cost the owners of dogs fourteen dollars. And women who don't like to do their own chores will pay a dollar and a half to have a veterinary's helper give their pets a bath!

Dog-lovers and men and women with a fondness for any domestic animals would like to see this profession far more popular. As it is, not much is known beyond the merest rudiments of the science. Competition would undoubtedly force more study, and more enlightened service.

We encounter a successful veterinary in a North Carolina town. He was a contented young man who wanted to marry before he finished his medical studies. For love's sweet sake—and because he liked animals, whether it be a puppy with a truly Bourbon pedigree or just an old sick cow—he shifted into this profession. His family is still horrified, but he is successful and happy.

All in all, however, young men and women in the professions have suffered seriously from the depression years, but their chance to engage ultimately the career they chose, and trained to pursue, is probably far better than in other callings.

**PART FOUR**  
**SERVICE STATIONS**



## *Chapter One*

### UNCLE SAM DIGS DOWN

#### CCC CAMPS

WHAT TO DO with these orphans of an economic storm!

The Great White Father—the Federal Government—saw these sparrows even in the titanic uproar of crashing banks, teetering railroads, foreclosed farmers and keening capitalists. Almost at the beginning of his administration, President Roosevelt organized the Civilian Conservation Corps to care for some of them, to “minister to needy boys and young men of working age whose lives were being undermined and shattered by enforced idleness, privation, and hunger, and whose parents or dependents were likewise in need.”

The major portion of these boys the President was eager to help were in cities. In the Civilian Conservation Corps, he made them pioneers building in American frontiers. He took them out into the vast empty spaces that still constitute most of our country: out into the mountains whose bare peaks touch the skies. Out into the desert where the far painted crags are a backdrop for the cactus, the sagebrush, the blue lupin and tiny wild peaches that hide the cottontails and rattlesnakes. Out into wooded parks and rolling prairies. Out along sapphire lakes of Maine, and in the tilled and rolling fields of Wisconsin and Iowa. He gave them work to do, work in the woods and on the lands, work the nation needed.

We have heard a great deal here and there about these CCC camps, and on the whole we hear them commended with a unanimity that has not characterized public estimate of all the New Deal's great dreams. Let us go and see them for ourselves before we join the chorus.

Let's go with Carl. Carl's father is a German baker in Chicago, out of work these several years, who has been forever nagging him because he can't find work. Carl's mother is an harassed drudge, silent before her choleric spouse, and given to outbursts of irritation when he is out of the house.

Carl isn't spineless. He bummed his way to Colorado last spring, but it rained all the time; he sprained his ankle hopping on a freight car, and finally came home, pretty wet. He is so glad to get his appointment to go to camp that he's almost in tears. First, you see, he was turned down because he had ringworm. He was routed over to the Central Free Dispensary and pled for prompt treatment as if his whole life depended on it. He was selected by a Department of Labor representative, and as soon as he was certified as non-contagious, he was ready to go.

Carl is sent to a camp in a National Park in the West. After ten days in an Army conditioning center, he goes on the train, to a small town, and thence by bus. He passes only one little village—not even on the map, jiggles over dirt roads, skids over damp adobe, until he suddenly sees the camp: The buildings are natural pine, and they *are* a camp. Carl is suddenly very lonely in these vast spaces, the only sounds the distant howl of a coyote, the rustle of a rabbit in the brush. The camp looks barren, without welcome. There's headquarters, a squarish structure, smelling of raw wood, the long mess hall, the recreation hall, the infirmary, barracks, and a



few other buildings, all crude in appearance to his urban eyes, and equally uncomfortable.

He is greeted by the commander, Lieut. Richard Janson, a slight wiry figure with vanishing blond hair and the most comradely look in his blue eyes. No brother welcoming the younger members of the family could greet Carl and his fellow enrollees with more warming friendliness. There's nothing of Army impersonality about him, and yet there is an inherent military authority. There's a reason for this: Lieut. Janson, like the majority of other commanding officers of CCC camps, is not a regular Army officer; he's a reserve officer with a commission in one of our paper units. Before he got this duty, he—well, he wasn't working at his profession of expert geologist, though he does have more than the requisite number of letters after his name. And he was as thankful for his job as any road-weary boy come to these spectacular hills from hostile city streets.

Even the commander's hearty hospitality doesn't lessen the misery of Carl's first days. His bed is a narrow army cot, on which he snores happily after about ten days, but at first he can't keep the covers over him, and Western nights are cold. There are showers in the washroom, but it's none too warm. He hasn't any locker for his clothes, and he's still full of the city's mistrust of the fifty-odd boys in his barracks. Often those first days, Carl would have liked to run away and hitchhike his way home, but his father and mother are going to receive twenty-five of his thirty dollars a month, and he'd stand the most savage torture before he'd confess to his father that he wouldn't work when he could.

At six in the morning a bugle wakes him. He's told that's reveille. He tumbles out of bed with his fellows and after

dressing hastily, gets in line. His leader reports any sickness or absence in his group. That done, they rush like boarding-school boys into breakfast. The chow is grand. There's prunes and oatmeal and cream and toast and coffee. The CCC rations allow forty-five cents per day per boy, and it doesn't have to be spent according to any orders sent from Washington. The fresh food is bought in the community.

After breakfast, in his overalls and funny hat, Carl climbs in the truck and goes off to the woods to work. At first the ride is terrifying and painful to Carl. The truck is crowded. Most of the boys stand up, while the hard tires jounce them, as they drive up canyons steep and sheer and around fearsome curves. Still, the boys joke and sing.

Carl's company is going to build a bridge across a trail. He has never worked with his hands at all, so he has to learn the simplest things: how to handle an axe and a shovel. The supervisor who is going to direct the job explains exactly what they are going to do, and why. Every day, even after Carl and his buddies become practically old hands, the man in charge teaches them something new. Some days he discusses it with them before they set to work. Sometimes he takes twenty minutes at the end of the day.

This is education on the job. Carl painlessly learns how to construct a bridge, not an engineer's complicated structure, to be sure, but a simple little one. In other camps boys working on roads gain enough knowledge to fit them to be, say, straw-bosses on road gangs. Those engaged in soil-erosion service know how to terrace, how to check dams and gullies, and in general absorb enough of the practical theory to be equipped for a work which will need many men for a long time to come. In park camps, boys learn enough landscaping to be good gardeners. They aren't the landscape architects

granted degrees by colleges, but they become competent when they have ability.

Carl's gang is working about twenty-five miles from camp, so at noon the army lunch wagon brings out a piping meal. After about eight hours in the open, including the time taken in transportation, Carl gets back to camp, a shower, a change, grub, and an evening full of any one of a number of things prepared to interest or instruct him. He can play baseball or box; read or write letters; he can listen to the radio; and he can learn. The educational supervisor has arranged for him to learn the rudiments of some trade that attracts him, or some purely academic subjects in which he's lacking. He isn't encouraged or stimulated to consider controversial political or economic problems; everyone seems afraid of that.

Week-ends Carl goes with the boys to town. He has five dollars a month for lavish expenditures on ice-cream sodas, cigarettes, and movies. Sometimes he gets to go to a dance when the townspeople invite the CCC boys. Sometimes there's a picnic. If he wants to, he can go to church, though there's a chaplain at camp who is far more of a fellow for Carl's spiritual needs than the dogmatic sermonizers in town.

We note with a great deal of interest that there is no militarizing of these boys whatsoever. Army efficiency keeps everything running on oiled bearings. Army order prevails everywhere. We expect that. But we take our hats off to the officers for doing a fine *human* job.

Undoubtedly the success of the Civilian Conservation Corps—and it *is* a success—is the result of the cooperation of established and experienced governmental agencies. The director, Robert Fechner, was appointed by the President, and is responsible directly to him. His advisory council includes F. A. Silcox, chief forester of the United States Depart-

ment of Agriculture; Arno B. Cammerer, director of the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior; W. Frank Persons, of the Department of Labor, and Colonel Duncan K. Major, Jr., of the War Department. The Department of Labor selects the men. The system is to use the local relief administrator as a deputy, and he in turn takes the recommendations of local welfare and social workers. The enrollees so enlisted must be between seventeen and twenty-eight years old, unmarried, citizens, of good character, and from relief families. There is also provision for veterans and Indians, but they do not concern us here. Fechner hopes that when the CCC is on a permanent basis, it will not be restricted to boys from relief rolls; there are many in those marginal families who could, and, he believes, should, benefit from it.

The War Department, which sets up the camps, examines and enrolls the boys, transports, outfits, and conditions them; supervises the construction of camps and takes the boys from conditioning centers at Army posts to them. It also is entrusted with operating the camps as to administration, subsistence, sanitation, morale, medical care, leisure-time activities, and educational courses. The Office of Education in the Interior Department acts as adviser in this department and appoints the educational advisers. The Army also has technical supervision of certain flood control camps in Vermont and New York state, and CCC projects on some military reservations.

The Department of Agriculture, from its various expert divisions, directs the forestry work, the soil-conservation service, wild-life and game-refuge camps and drainage projects, as well as many camps under the Tennessee Valley Authority.

It is extremely important to the country that this work be

done under the most competent direction, for inept work cannot be repaired. It takes anywhere from twenty-five years to a century to grow a forest! Carelessness is serious, and there is little of it in the CCC's service, in vivid contrast to some of the other new agencies. The cartoonist Darling says it would take the CCC boys fifty years to mend the damage done by the CWA in six months!

In addition, the Interior Department, through its National Park Service, functions within the national parks and monuments, in state parks and park camps under the TVA.

Under these agencies, the boys work for six months. They may re-enlist for another six months. The average time they stay is about eight months. As service is voluntary, they may leave when they like. Frequently the educational adviser keeps hunting jobs for them, though there is no regular provision for this. Sometimes their families find them jobs, or they line them up themselves. If they leave to work, they get an "honorable discharge." If they don't like it and leave without cause, they "elope" in the language of the camps.

When they go home, they are urged to go to the United States Employment Service and register. They have discharge certificates, and if they are qualified for any special work, it is written on the back of the card, which serves as a recommendation.

The boys always come home restored in morale, physically fit, far more confident than when they left, and often with a trade experience acquired in camp. We hear, and it's natural to assume, that these qualifications make it easier for them to find employment. Any personnel officer, any boss, likes a lad who is alert, healthy, clean. However, about 1,500,000 boys have been through or were in camp by October 1, 1935. At that time only 235,000 had found private employment.

They don't worry too much while they are at work in the woods and the parks, which is fortunate, or it would defeat the purposes of this experiment. We discover that one day before we leave. The CCC boys are cleaning up Rock Creek, the giddy little stream that runs through the little hills and sun-dappled valleys and gives Washington's largest park its name. In hip-length rubber boots five or six of them tug at a slippery log. On the shore others saw away at an old stump; while yet more squads work on scraggly and unsightly underbrush.

"Yah . . . lookit cheah what ah foun'," we hear a broad Alabama accent call from a tiny rapids, as a sawed-off lad holds aloft a pair of corsets he's found embedded under the water. Everything stops. We do too. We gave in awe at whale-boned, front-lace 1910 corsets. Wonderful! A gem for the Smithsonian Institution, we are sure.

"Workin' here's like huntin' buried treasure. You dunno what you'll find," explains an amiable lad giving orders from the Saddle Club Bridge. "We dug up automobile tires and coffee pots, and a furnace door, and a wig that scared us to death. We sure thought there was a corpse there too. Say, what kind of a dog you got there?"

I tell him, a Scotch terrier.

"What's his name?" I'm a little embarrassed, because before I can mention the pup's practical tag, he is on the grass making friends and reading his name, "Andrew Mellon Carnegie, Jr.," on his collar. "I got him before the depression," I apologize.

"Say," chuckles the CCC boy, "I don't envy those big guys nothin'. They dunno how swell it is to get to work after hangin' around. We're doin' a good job, too. Ain't it goin' to look purty?"

"What will you do when you finish your term?" I inquire.

"I dunno. But I'm not worryin'. I keep in touch with fellas that'll give me a tip on a job. But I got a year here. Jes', lady, ain't it a swell spot?"

It is a "swell spot," and it would be worth while to keep these youngsters at work out of doors, even if we got nothing for our money. On the face of it, the Civilian Conservation Corps is expensive. It costs over \$1,100 per year per boy if you figure all costs against the enrollee. In all we've spent about a billion dollars since it was started—spent this on a group of boys among whom the eighteen-year-old youngsters are in a preponderant majority. Thirty-three millions of this has gone for the purchase of national forest and national park lands; \$25,000,000 has gone home to the boys' dependents; and the going value of the CCC property, including food-stuffs, trucks, clothing, etc., is \$100,000,000. However, the Federal departments have estimated that these youngsters have done about \$580,000,000 worth of invaluable work protecting, developing, and perpetuating existing forests, parks and wild life; helping to prevent soil erosion which aggravates damage from floods and reduces land productivity; and aiding to establish new forests and parks and to bring wild life back to these lands and fish back to the streams. They have launched the nation on a sound and essential conservation program.

We hear pæans of thanksgiving for this service, and admiration for the boys. We also hear carping and criticism, some of it merited. There are always boys who go to town, get drunk, and generally make mischief. But on the whole, they've been an orderly lot, for which the direction of the camps must have full credit.

Communities are glad to have them. In the first place, as

we've seen, the men spend their money in town. The supervisors and officers, on salaries ranging from \$100 to \$250 a month, often bring their families, who add to the volume of trade. About 60 per cent of the food is purchased in nearby communities. That is likely to amount to \$2,000 a month per camp. Moreover, the townspeople are grateful for the work done. There is a Negro camp which has been clearing the land back of the campus at Williamsburg, Virginia, a co-educational college. When there was talk of moving it, there was a loud protest from everyone.

While we do not believe that the boys learn as much, academically, as the educational advisers would have us believe, they do learn practical work. Every camp has its own electric-light plant; they learn about that. Over 25,000 miles of telephone wire has been strung, and the enrollees have done it and learned as they progressed. There is usually an inter-corps-area short-wave radio system, which has provided education. They have learned the use of tools. Some boys interested in cooking have gained such valuable experience that they left for chef's caps and aprons. And over 10,000 illiterates have learned to read and write, interested primarily because they had to sign their names on pay rolls!

#### THE TRANSIENT SERVICE

The Transient Service for the wandering homeless, on the other hand, has been just as sloppy and inadequate as the Civilian Conservation Corps has been effective.

We first heard of these vagabond boys back in 1932, when we became agitated and sentimental about the "wild children of America," and thought they were like the roving bands of Russian children. They aren't, and they weren't. They never



travel in gangs, and except in isolated cases, they have never constituted, save potentially, a menace.

I myself asked the boys back in 1932, and now, why they left home and took to a life of wandering. The answers are still the same: Before the depression adventure alone was responsible for boys running away from home. Today it's different. A lad can't find work. His family is frequently poor—often on relief. There isn't enough, so he goes away, hoping to find something, or at least to rid the family of an extra mouth to feed, to supplement the canned milk and beef rations for his young brothers and sisters at least by his own portion.

When a lad decides to leave home, his bundle on his back and hope in his heart, he travels either by hitch-hiking or riding the freight cars. There is less hitch-hiking these days, because tourists are afraid of these rovers.

Not that the railroads are hospitable; but they are helpless. If anyone is killed or injured, they are liable. Still, there are many accidents. The boys are sometimes hurt or killed catching trains. They step on the cutting lever between the cars. This immediately brakes the train, throwing them off. This sudden stop is also likely to injure merchandise, the train crew, and other unknown passengers. One record shows seven transients killed while trying to board moving trains within a period of ten days.

For a while, the railroads in desperation simply added empty box-cars to avert danger to life and limb and to prevent breaking into sealed cars with danger to their freight. The boys climb into the reefers, the spaces in the freight cars where ice is kept during hot weather and stoves in the winter, to preserve the goods inside. When the boys climb

into these reefers, they open the vents and ruin such perishable consignments as lettuce or tomatoes. The commodities are then refused by the consignee and the cost has to be borne by the railroad company.

The railroads have had a hard time. It's the job of the railroad police to put the boys off the train, and for a while the town police were on hand to keep them on it. The communities have never wanted these boys. Not even if they do want to work. There isn't enough employment for their own citizens.

These young transients aren't like the old-time hoboes. Many of them have been to high schools and even college. But after a year or so on the road, they lose their desire to work. They form the habit of just getting by. They become used to going days without taking their clothes off. They learn stealing and vice, congregating, as they often do, in the "jungles" beside the tracks on the outskirts of the towns to cook their mulligan stew, swap stories, and sleep.

For thirty years there was provision for caring for runaway boys and girls. The Committee on Transportation of Allied National Agencies, including approximately nine hundred local public and private relief agencies throughout the country had agreed to prevent the evil practice of "passing on" destitute non-residents from one community to the next. Charity rates on the railroads were available to send these strays home.

The depression ended that. The agencies had no more money for it. And it has become quite useless to waste money on telegrams to boys' homes, as a rule. There is nothing for them there. There is nothing much for them anywhere. The townspeople resented a daily avalanche of hungry visitors, and often set a limit on the time they were allowed to stay.

The missions, flop houses, and some of the better agencies such as the Salvation Army, would give them supper, breakfast, a bed, and tell them to move on. It wasn't surprising that bands of shabby boys kept moving on, unwanted outcasts in a continent-wide squirrel cage.

Then came the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, with a Transient Service which set up shelters and camps. At first we were pleased and peaceful—we turned our eyes to our nose and our minds to our meditations. Then we began to become irritable. We heard that these shelters and camps were fine free hotels. Of this we were sure: they did not halt the growth of this wandering army. It has steadily increased in size.

We visit a typical one, at the crossroads of the United States. Here in a room on the second floor of a building that fairly reeks of relief, are about 115 persons, over half of them boys under twenty-five. They all came in this morning to "register," to tell about themselves, usually a marvellous fabric of lies.

After they answer a lot of futile questions, they get a physical examination, and if they have no contagious diseases, they are sent to a "shelter." They can, then, stay on and work if they want to. Work in this city consists chiefly of malaria control and beautifying the parks. If they work, they are allowed twenty-four hours a week of work and six of "education." For this they are paid on a sliding scale beginning with one dollar a week, and food and shelter. If they reach dizzy heights of excellence, they may have three dollars a week. Their dormitory is clean: a sea of narrow cots, and their food is adequate. There is nothing for them to do outside this little work. The community has no use for them. They are not allowed the use of the municipal swimming pool in groups.

Most of the established boys' clubs, with the exception of the Y.M.C.A., usually ignore their existence.

If they like they may go to a camp, where they live in any kind of barracks set up for them, with about the same amount of work and recreation. They are not obliged to enlist in these camps, as the CCC boys are. They are dreary lonely institutions, with value perhaps to the community but rarely to the boys. The equipment is inadequate; the plumbing poor, the lighting feeble. The boys never have the sense of obligation toward them that the CCC enrollees have, and no wonder. The CCC boys feel it is a privilege to enter the ranks; they feel they are wanted; they are doing work the country wants. In these transient camps, the boys are working for the good of their souls; that's all.

They're a curious phenomenon, these transient communities, as far from the life of any town as a tribe of tree dwellers in their native jungle. Their isolation becomes more vivid when one sees a spot here and there where something else has been attempted. For instance, in Kansas the administrator, Gerard Price, a former Northwest mountie, decentralized his purchasing, buying supplies in the communities where the transients were housed. He had the boys doing work the community wanted. In one district they were building a lake and a golf course beside it. The countryside was enchanted and took the boys to its heart.

However, the social workers handling this most difficult problem of boys, detached from their homes, unstable, restless, weary, are in general some of the most incompetent we encounter. The Transient Service was supported by Federal funds entirely, thus differing at least in theory from other portions of the relief administration. The boys don't belong; the relief administrators were usually either bored, or so occu-

pied with their state and local troubles that they had no time, or good social workers, to spare for it.

Thus we see a flat-chested spinster in a Southern city telling the one-legged superintendent of the shelter that he mustn't forget that nineteen-year-old Chester Greenhauser is a "problem child"; and a buxom dreamy-eyed blonde in the Southwest romantically relating her efforts at regenerating a man who certainly sounds like a confirmed drunkard and ne'er-do-well. They were far more usual than Gerard Price, or the able and practical Dorothy Wysor Smith in Los Angeles who, with the aid of George Outland, worked with genuine interest, a wealth of experience, ability, and a satisfying absence of sentimentality.

Now, however, these shelters have been "liquidated," the camps are being maintained. The Transient Service is sending boys to camps with acceptable work projects, and they are to be paid regular WPA wages. The idea is to send the younger men to camps which have programs of half work and half education.

The idea here is that it is high time for the communities to take back their own problems. Thus, the boys may go home to the work relief jobs which still are inadequate in number for the men and women already there, or they may continue to wander and fare as best they can.

This leaves both the homeless and the communities helpless. During the life of the Transient Service, community chest and other charitable appropriations for this purpose were decreased and in many instances eliminated. Budgets for 1936 were made up before the FERA decision and have not generally included sums for this purpose.

Thus, everything is right where it was before.

The closing of the shelters may to a certain extent reduce

wandering, but it is doubtful. The numbers of our vagabond citizens has grown until it is estimated to be anywhere from half a million to a million. Nobody knows. We see these boys on the road. Most of them seem headed for California, who, with some 800,000 penniless children of her own, has never put out the mat with the welcome sign for three or four thousand unbidden guests arriving monthly, according to Walter Davenport in *Collier's Weekly*, "fetching with them nothing but the alkali the desert covered them with, the rampageous appetites they couldn't satisfy at home, the remnants of the hope that died of the drought, and a belief that in California miracles grew."

In its heyday, the Transient Service tried in its feeble way to make arrangements to send home the boys, and the few girls, who had homes which they could locate and which had room for these prodigals. It did try to teach them something, to find them places in the community. "Stabilize" was the magic word we heard used.

Except for the camps and the uncertain work relief, the young wanderers are back on their own resources, to beg, to steal, and to find the help of the irresponsible agencies which gave them a limp hand in the past.

In the face of the pre-FERA program, Grace Abbott, then chief of the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor, a sane and practical social scientist, said to the nation in the *Ladies' Home Journal*, "Unless there is some constructive planning, thousands of young people who have graduated into unemployment and dependency will seek escape from intolerable home conditions in the irresponsibility, adventure, and quasi-outlawry of a transient life on the road. Their initial abhorrence of begging, of the dirt, the discomforts, and

the peculiar hazards of the life will gradually disappear in the excitement and camaraderie it offers. What alternative can we provide for the gradual breakdown by idleness, hunger, and despair of the high spirits and hopeful outlook of the young?

"Relief in their own homes, while a first essential to any program of prevention, is not enough for many of these young people. Assured of support for themselves and their families, some will return to school. But for many, and particularly for those who have become seasoned transients, new types of training centers are necessary. Such centers should seem to the young people themselves to offer the opportunity of becoming more rather than less employable."

The Transient Service was the outgrowth of Miss Abbott's and others' demand. It didn't function. The stepchild of relief, it was even less adequate than most of the projects.

Today the boys are retreating to the "jungles," the last resort of the homeless. There's a fire going there continually, and coffee always brewing to wash down the bits of bacon or queer scraps they cook in pails or on the tops of cans. Here in these communities of misery and potential crime, young boys meet older ones who teach or attract them into a life which will cut them off forever from a normal social existence.

The Transient Service is in the New Deal's red column, but merely liquidating it is solving nothing.

#### THE YOUTH ADMINISTRATION

Many optimists hope the National Youth Administration will be able to cope with these transient boys and girls. So let us examine this addition to the national alphabet.

The President in June of 1935 earmarked fifty million dollars from his \$4,800,000,000 work relief funds for these purposes, defined in the Executive order:

"First, to find employment in industry for unemployed youth.

"Second, to train and re-train young Americans for technical and professional employment opportunities.

"Third, to provide for continuing attendance at high school and college.

"Fourth, to provide work relief upon projects designed to meet the needs of youth."

This is an exciting idea. Too bad it had to be crippled at birth by incompetent midwives and stunted in growth by nurses whose chief qualifications are that they mean well.

An excellent and carefully prepared program for the aid of youth was presented after months of study and consultation by the Department of Labor's seasoned experts. The Office of Education formulated one of its own. Then, suddenly, out of a hat came this Youth Administration. It is directed by Aubrey Williams who, as deputy administrator of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and first lieutenant to Harry Hopkins, its chief, was already so busy that a connected conversation with him was as easy as picknicking on the peak of Mount Everest.

Mr. Williams, an unregenerate idealist even after his three-year term of tilting against practical politicians, conceived the idea that "youth should serve youth." For this reason he appointed with a few exceptions as Youth Administrators in each state and several metropolitan areas young men and women.

The result has been the defeat of the purposes of the institution.



In the first place, youth doesn't want to serve youth in this country. It isn't interested in itself, its situation, and its needs as a special group. We Americans ought to get down on our knees every day and breathe prayers of thanksgiving that although there are some two hundred youth organizations in the United States, there is no authentic youth movement, for the youth movements of Europe have been the nuclei of dictatorships, Red, Brown, Black, or any other color. Even more than uninformed or short-sighted adults, young people *en masse* are apt to accept dangerously simplified economic and political remedies.

The individual administrators are, of course, exceptions. They are themselves as a rule young men and women in their late twenties and early thirties fired with a missionary zeal for service. They are always baffled when they encounter groups of their immediate juniors who are not only not aware of the existence of a youth problem, but don't give a hang about it when the Youth Administrator diagrams it for them.

In the second place, these young executives, no matter how intelligent and eager, are rarely capable of coordinating and marshalling the state's resources for their purpose, for the simple reason that they have no idea what they are. They lack experience. It is one thing to review a list of the community centers, vocational schools, social agencies, etc., and another altogether to know which are efficacious, what are the personal and political ramifications involved, what has been done in the past, and so on.

Thirdly, the older, more experienced men and women in the community resent them. As a rule nobody consulted them before these administrators were appointed; few of them were acquainted with the Youth Administrators before they took

office; and on the whole they are inclined to be sometimes publicly and usually privately contemptuous of them.

And finally, these young Federal appointees *are* so young that they lack the human experience either to discern what is important to the boys and girls themselves, the wisdom to understand and to cope with them, or the tact to enlist the aid of the tried.

This writer does not believe that the young understand themselves or their fellows. Only time endows the average human being with perspective and penetration, with balanced judgment and wisdom. And time itself often fails!

Moreover, the amount of money appropriated is so little in view of the magnitude of the problem that utmost care would have to be used to make it effective.

By mid-November, 1935, the Youth Administration had allotted scholarships ranging from \$12.50 to \$20 to 104,501 undergraduate students in 1,602 colleges and universities. This is not new. As we have seen, it is merely a carrying on of the college aid begun in the last half of the 1933-34 college year. Under the NYA, 10,193 more boys and girls received Federal help. An innovation, however, is the graduate aid granted 2,785 young men and women working for masters' degrees, and 1,715 scholars engaged in securing doctorates. Only 177 institutions, however, have availed themselves of this opportunity.

In addition, Mr. Williams states that about 315,000 boys and girls of sixteen or over in the public high schools are receiving six dollars a month to aid them in continuing in school. This figure is a rough guess, and is probably excessive.

Students are supposed to work for these scholarships. In the colleges and universities they always do. This does not hold in all the public high schools. In the first place, there is

not enough work to be done, which they are capable of doing, in secondary schools. And in the second place, the principals often think it is too much bother to devise them. So the money is simply given away. The college and university grants may be given to anyone, at the discretion of the institutions' authorities; the high-school funds, on the contrary, are available only to children of families on the relief rolls.

This money is allotted to the states on a quota basis. Colleges may have these scholarships for 12 per cent of their undergraduate registration. It may ask for funds for 25 per cent of the number of masters' degrees it conferred the previous year, and for 75 per cent of the doctors' degrees. This latter baffles some of them. One Tennessee institution said it only gave one PH.D., and what was 75 per cent of that?

Ten millions have been allotted to the forty-eight states for work projects as this is written. Young men may work for one-third the WPA time, and one-third the Works Progress wages.

Here and there some things are under way. In Illinois youth expositions are being organized; in Philadelphia a recreation program is taking form.

S. Burns Weston, the Antioch College-trained young lawyer who is the Youth Administrator for Ohio, sees his position clearly. "We have asked ourselves," he says, "how can NYA in Ohio justify its existence; what fundamental contribution can it render within the limits of its resources? Clearly, we cannot pretend to be solving the problem of unemployed youth. At most we shall be able to employ, on a part-time basis, from five to eight thousand people in the entire state. Obviously such a trifling contribution in that respect is not relief.

"We in this state hope to leave a record that will demon-

strate to as many local communities as we are able to reach what the youth needs and problems are, what facilities exist, and what facilities are needed for future development.

"We hope to create that record through our capacity as a co-ordinating agency of all community resources, by means of developing a community-wide program which is a unified and comprehensive answer to the youth needs in that community, so far as is practical within the limits of NYA and community resources."

We applaud Mr. Weston and hope he succeeds, and that he produces a model administration.

We are thankful that a few young people will be given work. The necessary restrictions of the relief administration has allowed work only to one member of the family, the normal wage-earner, usually the father or the mother or the oldest son. This has left our juniors sitting on the doorstep idle.

In addition to the Youth Administration, the Federal Committee on Apprentice Training was set up, to evolve programs and to set up state committees defining apprenticeship in the skilled trades, its wages, period of training, and continuous employment. We know this exists, but we find little evidence of its activities as we journey over the country.

We also find efforts here and there for making the facilities of the United States Employment Service available to young people. The Youth Administration hopes to be able to co-operate closely with both of these bodies, and in some cities, such as Cincinnati, is already setting up junior re-employment services, similar to that established in New York City, which we shall visit later.

## RURAL YOUTH

We are perhaps, unduly sharp in our criticism of the efforts made by the newly set-up so-called emergency agencies of the Roosevelt Administration. We are keenly aware that their failures are beyond repair, because they are dealing with a perishable matter, youth. While they revise and re-organize and re-plan, the boys and girls of this generation are growing older.

It is a satisfying occupation then, to observe the work done by the older departments of the government. In its extension service, the Department of Agriculture in cooperation with state colleges does a fine constructive job among young people. The 4-H Clubs have done more than any one thing to improve living conditions, stimulate interest, develop better farmers, foster communal activities of a social and cultural nature tending to make country life more satisfying than any other single effort.

We will not investigate them here, for the 4-H Clubs enroll younger boys and girls than those we are studying. It is significant, however, to note in passing, that the members of these groups are almost always sons and daughters of the successful farmers, more often farm-owners than not.

There is also a growing interest in organization among the older sons and daughters of the land. In Kansas we find the Rural Life Association composed of members from eighteen to twenty-eight years old. Fostered by the State College at Manhattan, Kansas, it is primarily social. The young folks get together to have a good time. When they gather, however, they also take up problems vital to their own lives: agricultural conditions, self-betterment, home improvement, and related subjects. They are deeply interested in the present

agricultural program and the issues it raises. The college authorities do not attempt to lead them; they merely "suggest."

These Rural Life groups meet in a community building in the county seat about once a month, bent on dancing, cards, or dramatics. They also include a study session.

The Department of Agriculture's service to rural young people are so numerous and so valuable that we can only pay them tribute here and pass on. It brings education and stimulation and efficiency into the farm home, to the boys and girls in their own communities.

Over a decade ago, the Office of Education also went out into the country, with funds made available for Federal aid in vocational education under the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917.

Its result, in 1928, was a national organization, the Future Farmers of America. Today this body has over 65,000 paid-up members distributed among some 3,000 chapters in forty-six states, Hawaii and Porto Rico.

These Future Farmers are banded together to develop among themselves competent, aggressive rural and agricultural leadership; to create more interest in the intelligent choice of farming occupations; to improve their homes; to encourage cooperative effort among students of vocational education in agriculture; and to encourage organized recreational activities in their home communities.

These boys and girls are learning to be good farmers. If we don't believe it we have only to look at the records of some who got awards at the national convention in Kansas City in 1934. Here's Clarence Akin, of St. Francisville, Illinois. Clarence owns six hogs, twenty-three small pigs, two colts; and rents twenty-two acres of land for crop and pasturage. He plans to continue his farming while at the State Univer-

sity, returning to the farm later in partnership with his father. His three-year diversified supervised farming program gave him a total labor income of seven hundred dollars. He belongs to the local dairy club and is a member of the threshing ring. In a school of six hundred, he was voted the outstanding student, and he stood fifth in scholarship in a class of eighty-one.

That's a noble record. Take Lyman F. Getchell, Jr., of Limestone, Maine. At seventeen Lyman owned one pure-bred Percheron stallion, one pure-bred mare and colt, and three pure-bred O.I.C. brood sows. He rents four and a half acres of certified Green Mountain potatoes, and owns a half interest in a driving horse. His total labor income from his supervised farming program, including both horses and potatoes, was twenty-seven hundred dollars. He stood second in scholarship, too, in a class of thirty at school. He also will go on farming.

We could go on citing the success of bright boys who have banded together under the guidance of able vocational teachers, and are learning to make good lives for themselves, financially and socially.

This sort of thing, however, does not mushroom overnight into being.

We have in this country other institutions dealing with the lives and problems of our young people. Though they have national centers, in their policies and activities, they are local.

Let us, then, proceed on our explorations.

## *Chapter Two*

### THE LITTLE RED SCHOOLHOUSE

NO REVIEW of the service stations on youth's road to maturity is complete without an investigation of the school system. It is the oldest and most important agency affecting our boys and girls. It is essential that we recall what has happened to it, and how it is serving them today.

The public schools crashed with the banks. However, when the Michigan banks closed, panic like a prairie fire, ran across the nation. When the Alabama schools closed, few outsiders knew or cared. After all, we cannot buy groceries with the public schools. On the contrary, they are the largest item in our increasingly painful tax bill.

Free education is the cornerstone of our democracy, America's greatest contribution to civilization. But like all good things, it is expensive. We encouraged, and ultimately forced, our children to go to school, until one rainy day we found ourselves uncomfortably like the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe. We have so many school children we don't know what to do.

School enrollment has increased six and a half million in fifteen years. We now have more than thirty million school children. School costs went up a billion and three-quarters over the same period, until it reached two and a quarter billion, 3.35 per cent of our national income. In the first three depression years our income was cut almost in half. This spelled disaster to the public schools, not yet entirely repaired.



When times were good, it was a point of pride to give the young folks advantages that their parents had never enjoyed. "My Jimmy parlays like a regular Frenchman," Fond Father would say at the Rotary Club luncheon.

When times became hard, however, Fond Father, harassed by his tax bills and lengthening columns in red ink, reversed his attitude. "I never got any farther than the fifth grade," he began to recall. "Our young people are soft; that's all. Just tell me how a course in French is any good to a boy who is going to be a bank teller or a carpenter?"

So some communities, pressed by hysterical taxpayers' associations, began general slashing of school budgets. Others, needy and desperate with bank failures, unmarketable crops, uncollectible taxes, had wholesale economy thrust upon them.

"You can't get blood out of a turnip," the mayor would quote as he padlocked the schoolhouse door.

The school year 1933-34 was the worst in the history of the public schools. At least a quarter of the children and young people attended schools where the length of the term was half what it should be.

In the great and wealthy state of Ohio there were schools that did not open at all, and others that were open for only seven or eight weeks in the first half-term.

In Alabama the schools in 1932-33 averaged only one-third the usual term, affecting all the children enrolled.

In Kentucky many schools were closed a month and opened on shorter terms.

In New Mexico schools closed from two to four months early in 1933 and had even shorter terms in 1934. Oklahoma was not sure how long it could keep its schools open. This was but a fraction of the sorry rollcall.

These conditions have been improved to a certain extent.

Ohio in 1935 revised the bases for its apportionment of the state's public-school fund, and provided additional aid for districts whose local tax levies are insufficient for maintenance of schools upon the minimum operating cost for a maximum nine-month term. New Mexico decided to turn all receipts from its liquor tax in excess of its relief funds to the public-school equalization fund. Oklahoma appropriated \$8,200,000 for its schools. Many other states ultimately took steps to keep their schools open, though often the school years have been curtailed to eight and even seven months. Still, three million children in twenty-five states were either deprived of schooling altogether in the year 1934-35 or their school terms were curtailed from one to eight months.

This has kept millions of boys and girls in school longer than they might have remained under normal conditions. A boy who should have entered high school at fourteen is sixteen or seventeen as he finishes the eighth grade, and is already tiring of school when he reaches the second year of high school.

The greatest wholesale economies came in teacher salary cuts. They were reduced 20, 40, and in Michigan and Nebraska even 60 per cent. This has been improved, but the situation left the public with a debt of gratitude to its teachers. In Detroit, for instance, they gave necessities, from oatmeal to eyeglasses to their needy pupils. In New York City they contributed \$2,500,000, often five per cent of their salaries, for relief work among their pupils. In Caspar, Wyoming, they paid for children's lunches. The story is endless.

The school plants suffered from economy, and are far from admirable today. From data compiled by the National Education Association covering only one-half the states and ninety cities it appears that more than 700,000 children are

daily attending schools condemned as unsafe and unsanitary, and that at least 600,000 are doing their lessons in the shelter of portable buildings.

In use are some 5000 schools that have been condemned and many thousands more that should be. Some eight per cent of our school buildings were erected before the Civil War, and 34 per cent between 1870 and 1899. A total of 2,700,000 pupils are improperly housed and more than two millions are in schools that should be abandoned in favor of consolidated plants.

Crowding, because of reduced teaching staffs and insufficient room has put fifty, sixty, and even eighty children into classrooms designed for thirty and forty, lowering the scholastic level and increasing the dangers of epidemics.

Ruthless economies involved cutting of supplies and maintenance. Many children are still studying histories that do not mention the World War, the geographies which show an Austro-Hungarian Empire and no Poland at all! Repairs and service charges have been cut, and still are reduced. Buildings still have patched boilers. Parents don't reflect that it can only blow up once. Fire extinguishers are frequently old and faulty. Janitors are underpaid and overworked—hence likely to be humanly careless. Taxpayers don't stop to think of the menace of oily mops and cloths in a boiler room, or a fire escape blocked up because the janitor has no time to clear the ice and snow. This in a school overcrowded and improperly drilled for emergency anyhow. Need we think further? Some of us still remember the Collinwood School fire in Cleveland. A sturdy brick school with ample fire escapes. When a locked exit was finally pried open it was found that one hundred and seventy-six children had perished. In the best of times we have averaged five school fires a day.

We can go on with our scareheads. But let's pass over them, and see what has happened to the actual education our boys and girls are receiving.

The youngest plants, of course, were the first to wither under the icy blasts of economy in most states.

"Cut out the frills and fads" was the order to the school boards.

What are frills and fads? They are the things the old folks never had. So away with the kindergartens, the music and manual-training teachers. Close the Americanization classes, the night schools, the classes for the atypical child, the child who cannot see or hear well, or who is otherwise subnormal. The old-time education is good enough for them.

Out with vocational training, with guidance. Close the swimming pools. Give up placement, school lunches, medical care.

While some states and school districts have revised their attitudes, the majority haven't. In Ohio in August of 1935 we read the first report of a committee headed by Col. C. O. Sherrill, appointed by Governor Davey to survey the state Department of Education and the teachers' retirement system. Col. Sherrill and his committee suggested that Ohio's educational system should be divorced of "frills and furbelows." Recommending a "rational" program of education, unit state-wide control, elimination of "pervasive political influences," it predicted that "vague theories must make way sooner or later for stern realities." The survey believes that "the introduction . . . of intrusive innovations of highly speculative value and high cost is entirely unwarranted." Vocational education and extension of music teaching were listed specifically in this category.

With 11,000 school teachers unpaid, the report asserted,

"the impropriety—not to say the absurdity of . . . these new features . . . is thrown into a new high light."

This is not unique to Ohio. We find it in many other localities where we might logically expect the citizens to realize that the present conditions of employment put a premium on education, on knowledge of a trade; and that the probabilities of continued unemployment plus the certainty of more and more leisure due to shortened hours for the already-employed, give vastly increased importance to those arts and crafts which give meaning to lives dependent now on the movies and the radio for their recreation.

No schools are wholly good or entirely bad. Let us see an average example. Here is a description of the schools of Meriden, Connecticut, presented for us by Nicholas Moseley, the superintendent of schools, himself an intelligent and forward-looking man, well aware of the defects of his charge:

"Our three-year senior high school is quite definitely an old-fashioned New England institution," he tells us. "Our social studies are confined to the usual histories and commercial subjects. We have no vocational education, though we do cooperate closely with the State Trade School in Meriden. Guidance is almost non-existent except as it is provided by the home-room teacher or the Dean of Girls. Gifted and handicapped children have special provision only by a system of homogeneous grouping within the various curricula.

"We are on two sessions because of overcrowding and so are not faced with the problem of lunches.

"Our health program consists of classes in physical education, a full-time school nurse, and a doctor who devotes two to three hours each day to a very thorough examination of each student. We teach both art and music as well as the various branches of domestic science. One of the interesting

developments of the year has been a voluntary course in etiquette which has enrolled about three hundred boys and girls.

"We think our elementary schools are on the way to becoming progressive and our junior high schools are taking steps in that direction this year. The three-year senior high school, however, is so overcrowded with an enrollment of 1,450 that it is difficult to do anything but provide space. The teachers are inclined to be conservative and it is hard to wake them up."

We have in this country, of course, some remarkably fine school systems. Denver, for instance, would regard Latin and solid geometry as frills and fads for all save those who actually need or enjoy them; and it considers vocational training as essential as the Three R's.

Even Ohio is not entirely benighted. Dayton, for example, boasts an extraordinary cooperative high school, headed by Clare Sharkey, where students spend part of their time in study, and the rest in the various business establishments and industries in that city.

Let us review, briefly, some of the educational institutions we consider admirable.

Los Angeles, for example, is given to superlatives in education as she is to her climate. Let us visit the Frank Wiggins Trade School. The plant is so handsome that if it weren't so solid, we'd think we've wandered into a movie studio by mistake.

The purposes of this school are twofold: to serve the youth of the community and to contribute to the welfare of the industrial life of Los Angeles.

The young men and women who make up the student body naturally constitute the first responsibility of the school. The directors consciously strive to build in them a firm philosophy

of life, including a love of work and a belief in fellow-workers. The school sees as its second responsibility the delivering to the city of a group of skilled workers who will believe in the job and be happy in giving their best to their employers.

This huge school handles about five thousand students a year, training beginners and giving special additional assistance to the already employed. The minimum age here is sixteen years. Educational background essential for admittance varies from eighth-grade schooling in the building trades to a preference for high-school graduates in beauty culture, and a requirement of a diploma for office courses.

Students come here especially recommended from the city's high schools. When Johnny shows particular aptitude in printing, his principal sends him over to the Frank Wiggins experts with explicit recommendations.

When Johnny arrives, the registrar has a long talk with him; and then his instructors go over his interests and his abilities, to find out exactly the type of training he needs. If they have any doubts, one of the department heads or the vice-principal comes in and counsels with them.

The Frank Wiggins Trade School does not just turn out carpenters and plumbers and waitresses helter-skelter. It has an advisory trade committee formed of leading business men constantly studying the city's actual needs, learning what employers are asking. It also has a committee always gleaning new technical information.

The schools then train the boys and girls for actual jobs. The instructors themselves are definitely responsible for placement. When their pupils are at work, they find out from their employers how they are getting along, what further training they might find useful, where the school failed them, if it happened to. The school gives its diplomas only *after* six

months of successful wage-earning. Thus the faculty and officials have a constant check on supply and demand.

It keeps all sorts of information about its graduates, of a type which surprises our conventional selves. For instance, here's Edna Jackson. Her card in the school files describes her as a waitress, five feet six inches tall, weight one hundred and twenty-six pounds, blonde, nineteen years old, extremely competent. If you think some of this is silly, notice the uniformity in size and aspect of the girls in the next attractive tearoom you visit.

A waitress nowadays isn't just a girl who slings a glass of water, slops the coffee, and dumps an apparently imperishable plate of roast-beef and french fries at you. In Los Angeles, at this school a refined, home-type girl between eighteen and twenty-five is preferred, with the greater part of a high-school education, pleasing personality, good posture, and health. She studies for three months such matters as her appearance, personal hygiene, table setting, menu analysis, receiving of guests and taking orders; assembling the order in the kitchen, standards of service, a study of pay-roll jobs, duties of other employees and her relation to each of them, and the legal aspects of the occupation.

If she'd rather work at a soda fountain, she learns sanitation; operation and care of equipment; service; making of sirups; preparation of gravies and sauces; making of soups; mixing of drinks and flavoring of sundaes; arrangement of menus; salesmanship and elementary cost-keeping; and development of advantageous personal characteristics and attitudes. Then she's an employee most proprietors want.

The classes in the school vary in length. It has such heavy waiting lists that immediate admission is not always possible. One reason for this, its officials tell us, is that economic neces-



sity has sent them many boys and girls who would normally be interested in white-collar callings. Large numbers headed for college came over to the trade school. The classes in cosmetology are dotted with women former office workers and even school teachers. There is apparently an insatiable demand for beauty treatment in Los Angeles.

The Frank Wiggins School met the needs of the depression with a remarkable re-training program for men and women in the occupations suffering the worst from the economic crisis. For instance, we see a letter from one Blair Lord, a linotype operator who re-trained for radio servicing. He's so busy in his new work he hasn't time to call for his diploma, and sends thirty cents in stamps for it. There are stacks of such notes.

The school is reluctant to train where it knows there are few jobs. It is preparing, however, to teach the building trades, in which there is a scarcity of skilled workers around here, the instant this industry shows signs of life.

The faculty also has developed facilities for aiding men and women either unemployed or not steadily employed in keeping up-to-date in their old trades.

The equipment of this school is as fine as one could dream, and its staff competent both in technical and pedagogical quality.

Los Angeles also boasts a model business training. Its Metropolitan High School, headed by the rarely capable A. E. Bullock, gives a post-secondary-school business training. Instead of paying tuition at a private institution, many boys and girls come here. Here, too, classes do not always follow the seasons. When a new class in secretarial work is about to open, a bulletin goes around to the city's thirty-five senior high schools announcing it. It tries not to take just every

candidate. It explains to the principals of the regular high schools that a secretary must be average or better than average mentally, and superior in English composition. When the candidates come, they are tested in grammar and sentence structure to see if they have a genuine feeling for the English language. Factors of personality and appearance are important. Girls who are overweight, heavy-footed, with raucous voices or poor skin are handicapped. Those who are encouraged to enter the secretarial courses have a promising future. Mr. Bullock tells us that there is always a demand for really superior secretaries. However, while the school's counselling program cannot actually exclude the potentially unfit, it does succeed in discouraging many.

Mr. Bullock is glad to have anyone and everyone take stenography. "It's a good personal skill," he says. "But when it comes to bookkeeping, that's another story. We watch that carefully."

This school also has an excellent placement service. It retains two full-time "coordinators" who visit stores and offices, business and industrial plants, keeping a constant record of demands and desires. When the student is ready, after taking into consideration the recommendations of instructors—"but not too much, because they're likely to be as fond as parents," Mr. Bullock observes—as well as a series of tests, he is placed, if possible. The coordinator visits each student three weeks after he goes to work, to see how he is getting on.

Studies in this school are exciting; they come close to the problems that arise in every boy's and girl's life. The textbook on business principles, written by A. B. Zu Tavern and Bullock, is appealing and fascinating as advice to the lovelorn. If you're going to start your own business, it makes all sorts

of suggestions. Women like the shady side of the street, it advises, and they'd rather go to the basement than the second floor. It discusses credit simply and comprehensibly; presents essential knowledge for buying real estate and securities. It is fascinating on ethic and human relations in business. It teaches what Mr. Bullock calls "buymanship"—the value of money.

This school instructs in the bunk in advertising and how to detect it. The home-economics departments tell how to buy clothes. The theory here is that boys and girls have been taught a lot about how to sell, but they are not intelligent consumers. Without much promise of large incomes, it is essential to know how to consume. It's as good as a raise in pay.

If California schools are excellent, it is because of local development, with the cooperation of the state department of education. New York State goes farther. It is actually model. It exists as the University of the State of New York, which has no campus, no classrooms, no pupils—it is simply the state's department of education! In guidance, so important to our boys and girls today, it has evolved a service we would be happy to see in every other state.

Guidance sounds to unprofessional ears as if it is composed of aptitude charts and intelligence quotients and all the abracadabra of modern-day magic. Actually, the teacher here has a boy who thinks he might be interested in trade. How do you know? she inquires. When the bell gets out of order do you want to try to mend it? When the flivver breaks down, do you want to find out what is wrong and try to fix it? Have you tried to make a radio set? Can you repair a leaky faucet or a broken chair or a lock that won't work? In other words, are you "handy"? That word means you are skilful

with your hands and quick at seeing the relationship between mechanical things. If so, a trade is a good idea.

New York's guidance, its training, its apprentice training, its schools for the handicapped, are worth more discussion than we have space for.

The State of Pennsylvania also has public schools patterned for the most part after a program worked out in Harrisburg by the State Department of Education over a long period of time. Its vocational schools are also excellent, and it has made special provision for our boys and girls who find themselves stranded by a program of self-analysis and job guidance for them. This has been of infinite value in conducting courses in the past year. It raises for the directors of the classes the important problems of self-analysis; analysis of employment opportunities in the home community and outside it; fitting one's self to obtainable jobs; how to apply for a job, etc.

In neither of these states is there the appalling overemphasis in the high schools on preparation for college, even college boards, that we find prevalent in so many other educational systems.

These schools we have been discussing have grown over a good many years, however, and are continually subject to re-examination by their authorities. The school debacle of the depression has, however, resulted in some extremely salutary reforms. Foremost among these is the financing of the schools.

How have we been getting our school funds? Not out of Uncle Sam's pocket; not out of all these public moneys that have been flowing around. A school building may be a public work, but a load of coal to heat it is not.

Do we take our state taxes and divide them up, part for education, part for roads, etc.?

Not at all. We've been sending our children to school on the egg money. On a general property tax, described by the most famous American tax expert, Dr. Seligman of Columbia University, as "beyond all doubt the worst tax known in the civilized world today."

We don't have forty-eight school systems in forty-eight states. We have 127,000 school systems in as many districts. Because one tract of land is better than the next, some children get a better start in life than their friends. Where a glacier a hundred thousand years ago left a soil deposit that enabled men to carry on farming and industry to advantage, children today get a good education. Boys and girls who live on land the glacier ignored are out of luck.

We need no graphs and charts to show us what happened to real-estate values. One Missouri district was a perfect example of what happened all over the country. Once a thriving community, the entire district, if sold in the open in 1933 would not have been worth sixty thousand dollars. By the provisions of the state constitution, it could levy taxes of only sixty-five cents per hundred dollars land value. So all it could ask was \$450 for schools, police, fire protection, sanitation, debt service, and everything. At that it could only *ask*. It couldn't collect taxes.

Most state governments had some small appropriation for education. Some states, such as New York, have an equalization fund which adds to the maximum a district can raise the sum necessary to meet the necessary requirements. This does not, however, relieve the poorer districts of excessive tax burden.

The obvious procedure is to tax wealth where it exists and to spend it where the children live. This actually was done in North Carolina which met a financial crisis early. This

state, under Governor O. Max Gardner, completely overhauled its system of taxation, lifting the inequitable burden from the land, centralizing responsibility and cost of education, economizing drastically, but saving its tottering public schools.

This is the only state which has gone this far. Many others, however, built financially a sound base for their schools. Florida, for example, provided a continuing appropriation to the county-school funds from the general revenues, and extended the provisions of the free textbook law to provide at state expense free school books for all students in both elementary and high schools of the state. Michigan provided for distribution of fifteen millions from state liquor taxes and excess sales-tax allotments. New Jersey created a state public-school fund for equalizing educational opportunities and established a minimum foundation program. Texas increased its rural aid law, and revised the allocation of revenue from sale of cigarettes, diverting two-thirds of it to the schools. These are only a very few examples of hopeful changes in many states.

Another change for the better wrought by the heavy hand of the depression is the stimulated interest in consolidation of the one-room school. The Little Red Schoolhouse is a pretty symbol, but it's the most expensive frill or fad we have. It is an extravagance worse than rose-point doilies under solid gold finger bowls. In Sheboygan, Wisconsin, for instance, the per pupil cost in districts having six pupils or less is four times the cost of a school having thirty-five children in attendance. Yet while the Wisconsin farmers were dumping their milk in desperation, they supported 615 rural schools with an enrollment of ten or less. And ninety-one of these had less than five youngsters getting the elements of education.

The cracker-box politicians hate to close their schoolhouse. They will go to the most absurd lengths to keep them. Here's a slightly extreme example: When the 1935 school year approached, the school board near Pateros in Douglas County, Washington, counted noses. It couldn't find a single child to strap up his books and answer the call of the school bell. So it advertised in the Seattle papers for a teacher with children. Now Janice Smith, the third grade, says to her mother, "Mama, is school starting?" And Peggy, the first grade, has to sneak one of mother's apples to please teacher. Mrs. Josephine Smith keeps the school fires burning in exchange for a salary, a private school for her family, and a seven-room house to live in!

The answer to this condition is, in these days of good roads and transportation, consolidation of school districts. The urgency of the depression has expedited this. Indiana has reduced 8,800 districts to 2,100; Ohio has welded 9,400 into 4,200. Illinois has a new permissive law allowing her to cut her districts to 500, her officials to 2,000 or less, with profit to all except the eliminated officials. This is, however, only a good beginning.

Far more important, perhaps, than any of the above, is the trend toward change in teaching methods, a shift from the formalized teaching of subjects to "integrated" or "functional" instruction, revolving around the student instead of the subject matter. This is spectacularly true in Virginia, rated in the past anywhere from thirty-sixth to forty-third in quality in the list of states. Under the guidance and inspiration of Sidney B. Hall, state superintendent of public instruction, D. W. Peters, director of instruction, and H. L. Aswell, curriculum adviser, the state went about mending its ways. Instead of viewing learning as a daily exhumation of the

dead past and a recital of isolated facts, it developed a form of education which takes account of the rapid change in the world, and not only regards the school as an agency of preservation of culture but also a factor in re-creating it as these rapid changes come.

Take the subject of higher mathematics, so dreary and so useless to many of our boys and girls as they learn it. Here it is approached in a living way. High-school students learn how the romantic business of exploring depends upon mathematics. They see a compass, and develop an understanding of the angle and degree in a circle. They learn simple surveying exercises with compasses, ruler, protractor, and home-made transit. They find inaccessible distances through the Pythagorean theorem. They learn the meaning of ratio by measuring the heights and shadows of actual objects, then dividing one by the other; finding an unknown height by using the ratio and the length of the shadow.

Thus they apply science to their own lives. They make a survey to determine what communicable diseases have been endemic and epidemic in their own community during the last five years; what are their symptoms; how are they transmitted and how may they be prevented. What is the town's water supply; its garbage disposal, and so on, all learned by means of personal exploration, moving pictures; books, magazines, the existing community plant, and other laboratory studies such as chemical testing of foods.

These boys and girls are coming out of school with a far more lively interest in the world around them than most of us did. To them school is a dramatic experience; it's even fun.

Don't think for an instant that all the citizens have received this innovation with cheers. They haven't. There is always



a large group of those who fear and resent change. The old-time education was good enough for their grandfathers, and why isn't it good enough for their grandchildren? Dr. Hall has pacified them by not making the new curriculum compulsory. Anyhow, he couldn't. It takes time to train teachers, educated in the older pedagoguery. Moreover many teachers are as hostile to new ideas as the parents. One we met in Richmond explained to us that there has been no history since 1890; men and events must be buried, documented, and estimated before they are important enough to be featured as historical.

To avoid a public uproar in his state when he wanted to make changes, Clyde Erwin, state superintendent of education of North Carolina called in both the teachers and lay organizations. He appointed committees to make suggestions. Out of the mass of material, he is publishing pamphlets. Teachers will experiment. Out of the experience of the teachers, he hopes to establish a continuously dynamic program, along the general lines of the other progressive curricula.

From all of these facts, we can only guess roughly at the service the schools are giving our boys and girls entering into the working world today and tomorrow. Some of them have been seriously handicapped. Others have been helped. Some have had the advantage of a broad general grounding which always makes life more worth while; some have had vocational training which leads directly to a job and at least a chance to live a happy useful life. Others have been denied these advantages by the economic contraction of the depression years.

The school is the most important single factor in the lives of our young people outside their own homes.

The schools are ours; we pay for them out of our own pockets. If politically manipulated school boards do not give our sons and daughters the best possible training, it is our own fault. We are as much to blame as if we permitted the butcher to give us a rump roast and charged us for sirloin; as if we let the shopkeeper sell us patent-leather dancing pumps when we require good sturdy boots for our boys.

In our own community we must overhaul our educational methods and make intelligent financial provision for them. If we do not, ours is the responsibility for adding to the number of idle, maladjusted individuals who have no idea how to live in a world of skyscrapers instead of a Shoe.

### *Chapter Three*

## FIGHTING LEISURE HAZARDS

THE HAZARDS of leisure to young people are scarcely news. We in this country have always known that "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do."

Consequently the character-building agencies, some of them founded over three-quarters of a century ago, have been building continuous programs to fill the spare time of our young people with healthful, constructive pleasure and knowledge.

Most of us know them. Many of us contribute to their support. It is worth our while, however, to see what they are doing for the young men and women of this generation. If they are not important to the boys and girls, they should be.

Of all the social agencies we visit, the one which appears to us most alert to the problems presented, the most forthright and generous and liberal in shouldering its responsibilities the country over is the Young Women's Christian Association.

Let us look at the way one branch tackled its responsibility: the Y.W.C.A. in Rochester, New York.

Back in September 1933 this branch was asked to help search out facts concerning high-school graduates, their status and condition. Its members helped make either personal or telephone calls on 1,647 girls. Their findings are no surprise to us now: about 26 per cent idle; the same number gone on to college; 13 per cent taking postgraduate high-school work

and the same percentage working full time. Seventeen per cent could not be located, and three per cent were out of the city or married.

This investigation revealed that practically all those working were unhappy at their jobs. Girls prepared for offices were making out as best they might behind five-and-dime-store counters or assisting in someone's home. Only two per cent said they were happy in their work.

The "Y" promptly accepted the responsibilities implicit in this report. First it tried various methods of interesting them in visiting the "Y," and was surprised how few of the girls responded to the invitations to "fun nights" and planned programs.

Undaunted, it experimented. Finally it hit upon the idea of sending scheduled "hour by hour" curricula to one high-school class, and the response was overwhelming. Called a "Leisure Time School," it was apparently the sort of thing they could understand because it was near enough to their school experience.

The girls were asked to return these schedules individually and to talk with the secretary regarding their own programs. This made the first contact an individual and more adult-like approach, and also led to a personal understanding of and sympathy with each girl. It gave her a chance to tell her hopes and troubles freely.

Now the Y.M.C.A.'s general policy is not to lay down pattern programs, but to work them out in cooperation with small groups of members. In this way, the Rochester "Y" considered each girl in devising its plans. By the close of June 1934, 364 girls were enrolled and attending classes regularly. From September that year until April 1, 921 others came in.

To estimate the value of the work in the girls' own terms, this Branch issued a questionnaire to these Leisure Time School students, who assured the officers and teachers that it gave them something to do; gave them fresh ideas; supplied recreational opportunities; taught new skills, such as dramatics, sewing, piano, and cooking; gave them a chance to make new friends; to practice shorthand and typing (in the Brush Up Class); and permitted a change from the monotony of a poverty-drab home.

Sixty-two of the eighty-eight girls who answered the questionnaire walked to the "Y," distances ranging from a half to nine miles. Twenty-eight of these girls came once a week, the same number twice a week, twenty-five three times a week.

Besides the classes, special activities are planned, including dances, parties, talks, discussions, a mothers' party, dramatic presentations, ways to earn money, and even a summer-camp project permitting a week at this Y.W.C.A.'s camp on Lake Canandaigua.

This effort in Rochester is not unique. The majority of city associations are placing special emphasis upon work with "not yet employed" and "unsatisfactorily employed" groups of girls. The recruiting of these young women requires subtle handling and genuine imagination and tact on the part of the responsible committees. It isn't easy to find them. The down and out don't congregate. Many of them, moreover, are not in the poorest homes. The most successful method of reaching them has been the one developed in Rochester, by the Leisure Time or Brush Up School, where the program is developed out of the needs of those attending: need for maintaining and improving skills in typing, shorthand, English; personality clinics; all tending toward the regaining of

personal pride and morale. It is only *after* the Association has helped a girl at the point of her greatest need is it possible to interest and draw her into recreational activities.

In large industrial centers where factory workers have gone into domestic service, the Y.W.C.A.s conduct some admirable training courses for household employees—a happy terminology. It also does a great deal of work with groups of these domestic workers, educating them as to hours, wages, attitudes, and so on.

The Young Women's Christian Association is not conducted by frigid old maids. It knows its girls like to spend their evenings with their "boy friends." Many clubhouses have game rooms for mixed groups in the evenings. Many of them have provision for dancing. "Dine and Dance Clubs" on Saturday nights are popular as we might expect them to be. A small fee is charged, but if the girl doesn't have the price, that's all right; nobody knows.

Sometimes, as the women working in the individual associations know, girls beyond regular walking distance do not even have carfare to come to the clubhouse. So they take the "Y" to them. Richmond is an example of this. It has organized neighborhood groups, designed to take care of the girl out of school and out of work, and prevented from coming downtown by miles and expense. These groups meet in the homes of the various members. They concentrate on anything they choose: singing, discussion, exercise, or etiquette; or even on sex and marriage.

The women backing the Y.M.C.A. on the various local boards usually have as much courage as they have practical sympathy. They are not afraid of the current devil-words, and they are willing to let the girls discuss social, economic, and political issues within the precincts of the clubhouse far

more freely than is usual in other bodies dependent on public support. In one town we visit, the Industrial Girls' Club had been rehearsing a play based on the explosive controversy of Tom Mooney. The town was outraged. The Community Chest threatened to withdraw its contributions if the play went on. The chairman of the board, a wealthy and socially prominent woman, said, "Go ahead. The Community Chest is challenging the Bill of Rights." Ultimately the Community Chest withdrew from its stand.

This organization states clearly that in addition to endeavoring to build a program of education and recreation, to contribute to health, to help young women away from home with housing and food service as well as vocational information, advice and placement, it also aims to face frankly our social needs in areas of family and sex relationships, citizenship, and political and social responsibility, economic trends and work adjustments; and finally to build religious interests through services and classes and discussion groups on religious questions. Its paid and volunteer workers we usually find to be alert, intelligent, and attractive young women, not too old to be separated from the girls by years, and not too young to lack understanding and penetration.

Now none of these bouquets we've been sending the Y.W.C.A. are at the expense of the other groups long expert in dealing with boys and girls. Every community values its Young Men's Christian Association, which at its last reckoning served over a million and a half young men, two-thirds of whom were twenty-five years old or younger. This institution, too, labors to help boys, young men, and some older men to find something constructive to do with their free time; to find themselves occupationally and socially; to develop a wide range of interests, including health and recreation; to secure

education of current social and economic questions; to take some part in making a better world; and to develop a satisfying central philosophy of life.

The Y.M.C.A. is becoming more and more aware of the problems of young men today. Its National Council at Niagara Falls in October 1935 said: "It will be easy for the Y.M.C.A. and other organizations to overlook the needs of many young people who are out of school and out of work at a time when business is improving and many of them are becoming able to pay their way in membership and activities.

"To do so would be a big mistake. The National Council, therefore, urges all Associations to keep themselves fully informed about unemployment among young men and to continue to devise ways of helping as many of them as possible to enter into the educational, recreational, social, vocational, and religious programs of the Association along with other people."

The Y.M.C.A. has given generously of its thought, its time, its facilities during the depression years. It has been notable for its cooperation with other community agencies. It has opened its doors with free memberships, social privileges, gymnasium and bath facilities, classes and lectures, vocational training, job placement, guidance, and even free rooms and food for those in need.

Any criticism of the organization itself is perhaps best expressed in a speech addressed to the Educational Council at Niagara Falls by Thomas H. Nelson, president of the Chicago Y.M.C.A. College, in discussing the very fundamental problems with which we have been ourselves concerned. Said he:

"While we recognize the reality and the seriousness of the situation, we have not done enough about it. Let us direct our attention to some rather typical things the Y.M.C.A. can and must do:



"It can be a center where youth may learn about occupations; jobs that are open; conditions of creating for one's self a career.

"It can provide fraternity, the sense of belonging. Often we now call this fellowship and limit it to recreation and social events when it should be extended to other interests as well. . . . Self-planning, self-managing groups, whether forums, classes, dances, teams, or clubs, possess these potential values. But we too often are concerned only with the surface activity and the attendance of these groups rather than their deeper possibilities of fraternity. . . . We become so busy getting new groups started and new members for old groups that we give too little attention to broadening the interest and functions of the existing groups. . . .

"In the third place, we can teach youth how to think. In the fourth place, the Y.M.C.A. must give youth practical experience in developing social and civic competency. This means understanding of democratic techniques as well as of democratic ideals and principles. This means skill as well as knowledge. You and I have seen a handful of Communists handle a hallful of Democrats. They are skilled. They know what to do and how to do it to reach their desired ends. But the average citizen does not even know how to manage a democratic discussion; not to mention how to organize and lead a group in democratic social action.

"The Y.M.C.A. is still afraid of social, economic, and political education. It is amateurish in developing social competency. Its discussions of the Y.M.C.A. function often miss the point.

"Usually our leaders point out three possibilities:

"1. They say we might avoid social education.

"2. We might become an open forum.

"3. Some say we might become an agency for social action.

"Seldom do we talk about definitely training persons in the principles and techniques of managing social changes. Yet such education is essential for developing social competency. . . .

"Finally, the Y.M.C.A. must help youth align themselves with high and worthy causes. 'We witness today,' says Ortega y Gasset, 'the spectacle of innumerable hordes wandering about, lost in the labyrinths of their own thinking because they have nothing to which to give themselves.'

"Originally the Y.M.C.A. was a movement. It represented a cause. It united youth in a cause which was essentially Christian but not creedal. Today it is immersed—ofttimes completely absorbed—in operating an institution."

We quote Mr. Nelson thus fully because he expresses with far more authority than we, laymen who have after all visited but a comparatively few branches of this admirable association, could assume. We have seen this organization, with its fine clubhouses and equipment, its skilled staff and brilliantly devised programs, existing more for the surface needs of its community than endeavoring consciously to meet its broader opportunities, so ably described by this official. In this it lags somewhat, as far as we are able to discern, behind its feminine counterpart.

This also holds for the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Associations and for the Catholic Youth Organization.

Let us look at the activities of these and the other groups affiliated as the Jewish Welfare Board, whose departments consist of field service, educational activities, lecture and concert bureau, camp department, department of studies, administration, building, health and camping, publications, and **Army and Navy Service.**

Its activities closely resemble those of the Y.M. and Y.W. C.A. In addition, it has especially interested itself in the establishment of home camps or day camps for boys and girls who cannot attend its outdoor summer camps.

Its young people have a definite and a keen interest in the problems and the culture of the day, and are encouraged to investigate and discuss them. "Youth Faces Economic Security" was the topic of a symposium at a Jewish Youth rally in St. Louis in which both the Y.M. and Y.W.H.A. both took active parts. A conference of young people in Detroit discussed youth's relation to Judaism, to education, and to the non-Jew. A Youth Today conference, modelled after the one sponsored by the National Character Building Agencies, was conducted in Minneapolis under the auspices of the Minneapolis Council of Social Agencies, and similar conferences have been going on all over the East.

The Catholic Youth Bureau is constructed, in general, along the same principles. Its purpose is to provide service and information for individuals, groups, and organizations interested in the development of a balanced program of character-building activities for young people. In conformity with the general objectives of the National Catholic Welfare Council, it is the function of this bureau to stimulate and supplement the work of existing, approved agencies and organizations without supplanting them in any way. Believing that the character-building activities are properly the function of the home, the Church, and the school, it aims merely to supplement the work of these institutions, it states, in so far as it is good and necessary in the delicate task of "changing the child of the flesh into the child of God."

The settlement houses in the poorer neighborhoods have been aware of the problems of youth. There are a number

of these useful institutions in the country. In June 1935 there were 205 settlement houses identified with the National Federation of Settlements, and over 300 church houses of all denominations that frequently call themselves settlements. A study made in 1930 in 132 of these settlements is interesting. It showed 40,372 children under eighteen enrolled in clubs and 15,268 people over that age in the club work. In the settlements' classes were 72,829 of the younger group, and 97,628 in the older classification. And Lillie M. Peck, secretary of the National Federation tells us that these constitute only 16 per cent of the total number of persons served; the balance are not enrolled in any formal groups, but use the facilities of the house, such as the game room, the gymnasium, the dances, entertainments, and personal service departments.

The age group in which we are interested, according to Miss Peck, does not lend itself to organized activities. She says, however, that they do come to the settlements, using the informal facilities, and are regular patrons of the house dances, basketball games, and free entertainment. They are the groups which the house organizes—when it does—for baseball, basketball, soccer, and other outdoor sports. They are not necessarily members. The leaders pick them up on their regular corner hangouts, and get them to follow to the regular playing field, if there is such a thing. One thing which the settlements, together with other similar agencies, have provided is continuity and skill in leadership over a long period of years, and as we have observed, that is highly important.

We do not regard any one study as an indictment of any large institution or group of institutions. But the extensive survey quoted in previous chapters, made under the direction

of Miss Anne Davis under the auspices of the University of Chicago, which includes one of the finest departments of social science in the United States, produced some figures which at least provoke thought. Among the 3,242 boys and girls interviewed, forty-five spent some time in the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., or Jewish People's Institute, while 3,171 never went to avail themselves of the opportunities offered. Sixty of them spent some time in the settlements, but 3,129 never had been near them at the time the study was made.

The public has been most generous in sustaining these institutions, all things considered. For an index of public giving, we have the Community Chest contributions. There are now 417 Community Chests in all but twelve cities over 100,000 population. In 1932, while the depression was deepening and public relief was spotty and unorganized, the peak was reached with \$101,181,949, raised by 394 chests. It dropped to slightly less than eighty millions in 1933 and to a little over seventy millions in 1934. We may well take pride in our achievement in checking the downward trend at a point only 13 per cent below the amount raised for 1929, the last year when campaigns were unaffected by the depression. This in spite of the fact that during those five depression years net taxable incomes decreased some 57 per cent, and in spite of increasing taxation and stupendous public relief programs.

The total number of people represented by these Community Chest areas is 42,294,084, approximately 60 per cent of the urban population.

We—you and I—are financing these agencies. We cannot, in a swift swing around the United States, estimate the value or the contributions of each group serving our young people. While they are naturally dominated to a certain extent by the policies formulated by their national leadership, they are

largely successful or unsuccessful in the sum of the achievements of their hundreds of local branches. Those local branches are the ones you and I are supporting. Money alone will not make them competent and resourceful. Public interest and public support is not only stimulating, provoking, but heartening.

## *Chapter Four*

### THE STATE: THE WISE FATHER

#### PUBLIC RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

WE ALL CONTRIBUTE to the care of our boys and girls, whether we want to or not. We give with pleasure, with a nice warm virtuous feeling when we sign our Community Chest contribution. We give with groans in our taxes.

If we didn't regard our tax-money as a necessary evil, to be paid and forgotten as soon as possible, we'd notice where it was spent, and probably reduce that painful outgo. A little of it goes for recreational facilities; a lot goes for criminal costs because there are insufficient and inadequate preventive measures. We do not have to enlarge on that thesis. A day at home in bed, taking aspirin and drinking lots of water is a bore, but it's easier and cheaper than a fortnight with the "flu."

Most cities and towns have playgrounds and parks. None has enough, and almost none makes maximum use of them. We have a lift of heart as we stop on one in Memphis. It is sunset, in a factory district so poor that it could not even support a cheap moving-picture house. The playground is high over the Mississippi River, on the very spot, so legend has it, on which DeSoto stood when he first saw the Father of Waters. Here are a couple of sailor lads from the river boats, making sand pictures. There are a couple of young men playing tennis. Some mothers, in a quilting club, are off in a

corner, all working on one quilt, while their children are playing games.

A whistle blows. Time to lower the flag. Everyone gathers and stands still. The young man and young woman, playground leaders, call the honored children who reverently haul down the Stars and Stripes for the night. They all pledge together, in voices with adolescent break, with childish shrillness, or the deep bass of maturity, "My heart—my mind—my body—for my God, my Country, my Flag." These may not be the exact words. We aren't sure because we are stirred by the earnest patriotism of old and young. We feel that this is a solidly founded patriotism, based on something tangible the country gives those in need of more than bread.

It has given, and they are grateful. Well they might be. Memphis has met its needs with a superb system of municipal playgrounds and community centers, open and active the year round, and many of them from early morning far into a flood-lighted night. Under the direction of an offhand little genius named Minnie Wagner, there's a comprehensive program for all ages. The playgrounds aren't something impersonal, just for the poor. They are all over town, and each one is supported by its own neighborhood, supported in interest and activity. It has an admirable staff of eager, competent, and underpaid directors, whose salaries range from a magnificent ninety dollars a month for the oldest employees to fifty dollars for the newest recruits. They give service and enthusiasm beyond the capacity of any pay envelope. Here, of course, they reflect the attitude of the community and the director. All the equipment is given by neighborhood groups, however poverty-stricken. The Negroes give through their churches. Sometimes they have no money; then they give work. In one Negro center we see, the wading pool was built



by the hands of the fathers and young men; in another the tennis courts.

Some other cities have valued recreation enough to give it serious attention. Mere social work will not avail to draw boys and girls in their teens and early twenties onto them. W. Duncan Russell, general director of the Community Service of Boston, says, "Recreation systems must come to realize that to reach this group they must employ someone who is not strictly a playground director, but who is an organizer and visits these young men in their 'hang-outs,' their club-rooms, their street corners. It has been a high-powered salesmanship job to enlist 290 teams in Boston summer baseball, and no one will realize what an extensive canvassing job it was to bring them in. It has been a help in some instances to bring in a local committee in the different sports composed of older men whose past sport records or prestige gave us an entree to teams in their district. But the most important point in our organization has been in meeting the boys on their own footing."

The National Recreation Association stands as an expert adviser to playground departments, acting as the Federal Reserve System to member banks: a sustaining influence, a source of information, and an able representative in matters of general import. It is available to help all of us who are interested in making the recreational centers dynamic and crime-preventive institutions, as well as offering healthful and wholesome occupation both to the jobless youth and to the others in their leisure time.

In our journeying we see regrettably few good ones. The numbers of good and imaginative directors are even more limited.

In addition to playgrounds, we support with our taxes pub-

lic museums and libraries which should benefit the boys and girls having a hard time of it filling up their idle hours. Look again at Miss Davis's study. Of all the boys and girls who discussed the libraries, 2,961 had not read a single library book; 136 had read one, 79 had read two, 36 had read three, nine had read four, and only one admitted to reading five or more! Apparently it wasn't even worth while to inquire whether they had been in the habit of enjoying the museums!

Some communities have waked to the potentialities of these institutions. For instance, Homestead, Pennsylvania, opened a "Depression University" for boys and girls between eighteen and twenty-five, back in 1932. It started with six youths in a local church. Outgrowing the church, it moved into the exceptionally fine Carnegie Library. Subjects studied are decided by the vote of the students.

There's a "Pack Horse Library" in Leslie County, Kentucky. In this back-mountain county where the only way to reach the people is along creek beds, four young women, all under thirty, travel on horseback distributing five hundred library books to fifty-seven isolated communities.

The Minneapolis Public Library has given special care to vocational guidance. The Buffalo Museum of Science has extended its activities for youth far beyond the realm of scientific education, with craft classes, lectures, athletics, social affairs, glee clubs, and even chess, checkers, and ping-pong. The Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts has free classes. The Newark Museum has a remarkable "Hobby Shop." . . . We could give quite a list of most admirable and successful efforts. But not nearly long enough!

Few of them have aggressive methods of attracting boys and girls. The Cleveland Public Library is an outstanding

exception. It asks school librarians to give personal notes to the Chief Librarian to every student who has no public library card. If a graduate doesn't present it, within a given period, the library follows him up. At the Board of Education's placement department where young people request working permits, a printed invitation to use the library's resources is given each applicant.

In New Rochelle, New York, the Public Library gets names of young people from the senior high school, the Board of Education, church and club groups, and Parent-Teacher associations. Then it sends out personal letters written to appeal to each individual's interests.

These are all of unquestioned value in helping worried, despondent boys and girls over leisure-heavy days, and in giving even those at work an active creative interest, something novel, and satisfying, and lasting.

We know it is a preventive against crime. We know we haven't enough of these health-giving measures because our record of juvenile crime continues to increase. Let us stop here and see what happens to boys and girls who actually do come afoul of the law.

#### THE JUVENILE COURT

First, we have the juvenile courts, designed not to determine innocence or guilt but to ask the boy or girl, as Judge Julian Mack has phrased it, "What are you? How have you become what you are? How can we direct you that you may go along the straight path that leads to good citizenship?" It is supposed to help with problems of health, home conditions, school, and recreation; get the cooperation of the parents, or, where this is impossible, place him in the institution or foster home best suited to his needs.

This is a beautiful idea. We passed a law. We set up the machinery to rear a nation of Presidents. What is the result?

A study of one thousand juvenile delinquents, made by Professor Sheldon Glueck and Dr. Eleanor T. Glueck, part of the Harvard Crime Survey, gives us the clue. They traced the careers of these boys for five years after they had passed through the Boston Juvenile Court, one of the best in the country. The late Judge Pickering Cabot had passed on these cases, aided by the Judge Baker Foundation Psychiatric Clinia.

Over 88 per cent of these boys and girls continued their delinquencies. They were arrested on an average of 3.6 times each. Nor were their arrests for petty violations. Two-thirds of the entire group committed serious offenses, largely felonies.

It is true that most of the youngsters brought before the juvenile court are netted from the lower strata of society. They are not, however, all psychopathic cases. The boys studied by Dr. and Mrs. Glueck show this. The normal and super-normal group numbered 41.6 per cent. The dull ones with an I.Q. of 81 to 90 formed 28.2 per cent of the list; while 17.1 per cent were border-line cases and 13.1 per cent were actually diagnosed as defective.

We can do little for boys and girls doomed by incurable handicap of mind or body. We are resigned to that. What about the rest? Are we simply dosing our ailing youngsters with cod-liver oil instead of castor oil and calling it progress?

Even the cod-liver oil treatment is not universal. An extensive survey made by the National Probation Association proves that. We thought we had rescued our children from jail. In fact, we felt pretty good to think we were keeping impressionable adolescents from "back of the yards" as far from the

"Al" Capones and "Legs" Diamonds as we keep our own youngsters. Not at all. About one-seventh of the juveniles held are kept in jails and police stations. Here are a few of the examples the report quotes:

Sixty-one children held in a local jail one year is the record of one community. The boys were incarcerated in the gloomiest part of the jail; the girls in the women's section where patients suffering from venereal diseases were kept for treatment.

One lad was put in jail and forgotten for ten weeks.

Another was so frightened by the "lock-up," so despairing, that he hanged himself.

Within commuting distance of New York City, a state with a progressive juvenile court law, a little girl of ten, not delinquent, merely a witness on a charge involving her mother, was held in a cell of the county jail for over three months. With no school, no play, no fresh air, she lost weight, became so listless and pale her worried jailor secured her release. It was then discovered she had contracted tuberculosis.

Can this happen many places?

Well, Michigan, Illinois, Nevada, and Oklahoma prohibit the detention of children under twelve in grown-up jails.

In thirteen more humanitarian states, no child under fourteen may be kept in jail.

Fifteen others think an adolescent of sixteen or over may safely be exposed to the sights and sounds, the terrors and threats of an ordinary prison.

Moreover, many modifications of statutes create exceptions which make even these laws often ineffective. In Alabama, for instance, children under sixteen may be held in jail by order of a court, not necessarily the juvenile court, when "ab-

solutely necessary." Massachusetts has a time limit: ten days on each order and twenty days before final disposition of the case.

Other detention facilities are often little better. Sometimes the almshouse, peopled with the feeble-minded, the epileptic, and often degraded, aged, is used.

In one Eastern city delinquent or dependent youngsters, no matter how healthy, are sent to the hospital and kept in bed.

In a Southern city, the old county farm, a dilapidated frame house, without bathtubs or plumbing, heated by stoves, which the Board of Health refused to license as fit to use, serves as the detention home for the court's children.

Houses of detention, conceived as the first aid in caring for our wayward youth, are often actually jails, with locks, bars, grating, and cells. Not infrequently the fire hazards are great. Too often these structures are curiously located. One is bounded on three sides by cemeteries and on the fourth by a railroad. Another has windows facing the jail only a few feet away, so that the children may, and do, hear obscenity and unwholesome conversation.

The state, in its role of kindly father, uses harsh and cruel methods of punishment in some detention homes. Confinement in solitary cells is not unusual. In one place a cold, windowless basement room with a brick wall, cement floor, and ventilation only through the laundry chute, is dedicated to discipline. Straitjackets for temper tantrums, chairs chained to naughty children, special dress, and even girls' clothes for recalcitrant boys are some of the forms of discipline the National Probation Association discovered.

Even where such practices are not in vogue, the detention home suffers from lack of intelligent schooling, recreation,

and medical care. In one home, tonsils are removed on the kitchen table.

It is unfair to imply that these conditions are universal. There are noteworthy exceptions such as in Cleveland and Los Angeles. And the most advanced, most successful method of prevention is the one of which Boston and Baltimore are proud: the use of private families and boarding homes.

Let us go from the question of detention into the juvenile court itself. What is wrong with it? We have clinics, psychiatrists, probation officers, and social workers who collect about every boy and girl who blunders a dossier of statistics: genealogy, case history, physical and mental and soul tests records—such a conglomeration of documentation that, after noting the results of the Glueck report, we are inclined to believe like Oscar Wilde, “They show a want of knowledge that must be the result of years of study.”

How can this be? Let us lay aside, for a moment, the scientific data of the Harvard Crime Survey and see for ourselves how a juvenile court is conducted. We cannot draw conclusions from a few visits, but we can get an impression.

Let us see what happens to young people in the City of Brotherly Love. We arrive on Friday, “delinquent day.” If we had come on Wednesday, we could have seen what happens on “dependent day.” This court sits only two days a week.

We are directed into a square, high-ceilinged chamber; three sides of the soiled marble walls are rimmed with benches. Humanity, of assorted sizes, ages, color, and accoutrements are squirming here. Policemen, bailiffs, plainclothes men, and social workers mill about.

“Where does the Judge conduct his hearings?” we inquire.

“Here,” the bailiff answers, surprised. We are, too. This is

not precisely the calm, intimate atmosphere designed to reassure a frightened boy.

Now the Judge enters—the president judge of the Municipal Court. It is customary for the president of the Philadelphia municipal bench to take the juvenile court assignment. He is an elderly man, with a kindly face. He sits on his judgment chair in his black robes high above the rest of us. Below him, working under a blue light, sit the court reporter and the doctor. At his right is the court representative, who invites us to sit beside her and to look with her at the dingy records of each culprit as he comes up.

“Number Twenty-one,” bawls the bailiff. Miss Watson, the Court Representative, pulls the folder of Number Twenty-one from the pile before her. A crowd assembles before the Bench. The culprit is Ike, a well-poised boy of sixteen with an intelligent, expressionless face. Around him gather a two-hundred pound policeman; a detective; a dumpy little woman with red eyes, wet handkerchief, and very little chin, Ike’s mother; a slick-haired man with clothes dressy as his teeth, Ike’s father; a timid, apologetic little person with feeble voice, the plaintiff; and a small, sharp-faced blue-and-white uniformed representative of a social agency.

The proper official comes before them and mumbles, “You-swear-to-tell-the-truth-the-whole-truth-and-nothing - but - the-truth-so-help-you-God?”

Casually, they all swear.

Miss Watson puts on the Judge’s desk a beaded bag, a Chinese lacquer box, a large assortment of imitation jewelry, the intimate parts of a machine, a gilded lamp, a fat watch with a loud tick. “That’s enough,” the Judge halts the exhibits. “Now, Ike, did you take these articles?”

We expect from the presence of the detective, the plaintiff,



and the evidence, a denial and plea. In short the procedure usual in criminal courts. But——

"Yes, sir." Ike is definite. Pleased, too, at being the center of so much attention.

"Glen Mills," says the Judge succinctly.

"Please, sir," intervenes the Timid Person, "the bicycle he stole ain't here."

"Where is the bicycle, Ike?" Ike gives prompt and explicit instructions about its location.

"Your Honor, I'm sure if you gave Ike another chance," murmurs the social worker.

"He's had his chance. These boys know better. They think they can get away with anything if they're under age."

"Number Thirty-seven."

This is Tony, an eleven-year-old whose fringed eyes are so big and bright they make the rest of his face seem even paler and smaller than it is. He holds his cap in both hands and looks squarely up at the Judge.

"He runs away from home all the time, Your Honor. I can't do nothing with him." His father, an undersized workman of forty-five or so, has a harassed anxious look.

"Have you ever tried a strap?"

"Your Honor, I've beat him till he's black and blue. It don't do no good."

"I say he ought to go back to his Ma," a young, hard-faced woman interpolates. "Your Honor, he ain't really his kid anyhow. His first wife was no good."

We can see that home. The middle-aged man with his young, flashy wife. Tony, the nuisance, the expense, taking up room and money when there is not enough of either. He is here today because he was caught tinkering with an entrancingly complicated piece of machinery in a shop where he

had elected to spend the night. It had not helped the machine. Said the Court:

"Now, my boy, you're just trying to break into jail. There's nowhere you can't get in this great country if you only do right. Go home. Be a good boy." Well, we wouldn't be good. Tony probably won't either.

Number Eleven is Joe Malloy, who had broken into a shop window destroying twenty-two dollars' worth of merchandise. Rules the Court, "Probation until you pay back the twenty-two dollars. If you don't pay it, I'll send you away."

And so it goes. Faster and faster the procession of young faces, bright and dull, defiant, teary, bewildered. At last the courtroom is clear. So is the docket of fifty-eight cases. Only five were settled without hearing; the other fifty-three were heard in a little less than two hours. We could not keep track of the number. Miss Watson tells us the total. Disposition of fifty-eight lives in one hundred and ten minutes. Jovian, we reflect.

Still, it is not as simple as that. These boys and girls did not come from the patrol wagon into the courtroom, nor were the Judge's decisions as casual as they seem. What comes before the courtroom? Let us go through the passageway into the House of Detention and find out.

When Ike was arrested, he was brought into this thinly disguised jail. Every door is locked. There are iron gratings wherever neccessary. Ike was held here until he came to trial. He was given a physical examination, interviewed by a psychologist who gives him the Binet-Simon test "in general." He was then turned over to Dr. D. G. Davidson, the psychiatrist.

Dr. Davidson, though armed with a "case history" of Ike, which includes records of his home, family, environment,

school experience, etc., did not pay much attention to it. He studies so many boys and girls he feels he can do without it. The psychologist makes a statement to the court and Dr. Davidson makes a recommendation as well as a diagnosis. Says he :

“The tendency of untrained workers is to expend a great deal of sympathy on such children . . . in theory very laudable but practically very harmful in the case of the street urchin type. The gamin of the gutter does not understand, and to him any display of fineness and kindness is a display of softness and imbecility which should be taken advantage of to the utmost.”

Ike's case was then heard before Dr. Davidson and the referee. Had it not been so serious an adjustment might have been made out of court. As he had to wait, however, he went to a school in the House of Detention, taught by a kindly aged woman. Still, Ike had a great deal of time to brag of his exploits and swap boasts with the other boys.

Had Ike been put on probation like Joe Malloy, a probation officer would have supervised him, though we are not sure how thoroughly. The officers of this court have a great deal to do, and some of them work hard. Philadelphia's political character is not unknown. The probate officers are not likely to lose their jobs while the ward boss reigns.

Let us see how this court resembles the Boston Juvenile Court shown us in the Glueck report.

If a boy or girl is arrested in Boston, he is “booked” at the police station and a complaint is filed in the same verbiage as an indictment against an adult. If possible, he is brought at once, to court, which sits daily. If not, he is sent home or, if this is inadvisable, to a boarding home. At the first hearing the probation officer, the boy, his parents, and the

policeman, but, as a rule, no witnesses, appear. Sometimes Judge Cabot would talk alone to the parents, sometimes to the boy in a private interview.

This first time Judge Cabot would try to learn the background and needs of the lad. "Tell me a little bit about how all this started? When did you begin to do this sort of thing?" If the boy protested he had not done wrong, the Judge would say, "That may be so; but tell me something about yourself. My aim is to find out what kind of a boy you are and to help you." Then, endeavoring to get the boy himself to make suggestions about "making good," he would ask, "How can you make good in school? What do you want to be when you are grown?"

If he felt the boy should be examined at the clinic he would ask him to go back next week with his mother, and to return to him for a second hearing to review the findings of the psychiatric clinic.

Until the later years of his life when Judge Cabot secured two or three probation officers of intelligence and perseverance, he had little faith in probation. The good probation officer must do something more than let the boy report. He must understand the family, interpret the lad's delinquency to his parents, and the family attitude to the boy. He must put his young charge in touch with such constructive community forces as boys' clubs or settlement houses, and help him to gain a healthy viewpoint toward life and its responsibilities as well as its legitimate satisfactions.

Then too, the Drs. Glueck find the probation officers are often eager to "close" a case, and hence overoptimistic about their charge's future. Also, they are inclined to blame the social agencies for their own failures.

In making his decisions, Judge Cabot studied the report of

the clinic carefully. He did not always, however, follow the recommendations for treatment. For a judge must not only be concerned with the welfare of one erring boy, but of society as a whole. The good of the two are not always synonymous. Moreover, the clinic's report is but an imperfect summary of its views, and constitute only one set of data, to be weighed in the balance with the others.

There are pitifully few juvenile courts as good as this. We don't need all our fingers to count them, experts tell us. The only one we visit is the Baltimore court where Judge William Waxter sits in his peaceful room, panelled, walls and ceiling, in walnut, thickly carpeted, furnished only with a wide empty desk and a few chairs. Judge Waxter sits alone, with one unobtrusive young man well behind him. Here is no hint of black-robed judgment—just a business-like bespectacled young man through whose quiet voice threads sympathy and understanding, and to whom any bewildered adolescent would confide his ambitions without chagrin.

This court, as we've noted, has no house of detention, employs a full-time psychiatrist and pediatrician, and genuinely skilled probation officers. The schools cooperate. The Board of Education here has made a unique demonstration in this field by establishing a public school in the district which had the worst delinquency problem, with a program designed to reduce it. Machine shops, laboratories, vocational classes, recreation for all hours of the day and night have not only made this district proud of the best court record in town, but they present a dynamic example of what a community can do with this problem.

What is wrong with our juvenile court system? Four points emerge pre-eminently from our surveys:

First, the fact that it is a court at all. Says Judge Waxter,

"I see no necessity for a juvenile court, with all its fear-inspiring paraphernalia of policemen, lawyers, and legal jargon. The only law necessary is one to deal with parents. Justice has no application to children. We are trying to give the boy or girl a break."

The second thing wrong with the court, as a rule, is the judge. Let us recall how he is prepared to understand and to save human lives, to administer a staff of professional social workers, and to marshal the facilities of the community in behalf of his wards:

When your judge is a young fellow, he goes to law school. He studies contracts, torts, bailments, admiralty, and similar subjects useful in helping Ikes and Tonys to become honest happy men and women. Then he goes into a law office and gets into politics. Anything libelous we can say about most city governments is certain to err on the kind side.

Not that all judges are dishonest. Quite the contrary. Few of them are as frank as the mid-Western judge who, when he took office, dismissed every employee of the juvenile court and filled his offices with his henchmen. Still, appointments tend to be political.

Nor are judges appointed for their special adaptability for this service. Only a few cities appoint judges for life, or even for a long term. For the most part justices of the superior, district, or circuit benches are assigned to juvenile court service for periods which vary from one to ten years. Thus the lawyer has no future in this court, and little ambition.

Not all judges are lawyers. A study of the North Carolina juvenile courts in 1929 showed that eighteen out of seventy judges had completed grammar school only; twenty-three had completed high school; and three had studied law. Salaries were low, ranging from twenty-five to six hundred

dollars a year, except in six instances. All the seventy-seven courts reporting possessed between them twelve full-time and eighteen part-time probation officers.

The third flaw, in many cases, is the detention system.

The fourth difficulty resides in the staff of the court, too often composed of political appointees, widows, or just persons in need of a job. One Southern city has as chief probation officer a Confederate Army officer whom the judge is too kind to replace. Even when the judge makes a sincere effort to obtain the best assistance available, salaries are often too low to attract and to hold well-trained men and women.

Psychiatrists are often inexpert. They are too frequently appointed through political influence. Psychiatry is a new field. Some surprising blunders are committed in its name. Mere psychology produces even worse results.

Let us not, however, blame the court and its officials for these conditions. We established the machinery. We have not checked to see whether or not it is the right machinery for our purposes.

Perhaps we need new machinery. We will always need resource to the courts to take children from parents unfit to care for them. We need courts where there is real controversy. In approximately 90 per cent of the cases, however, no contest is involved and no such legalistic approach is required.

What we need, according to Judge Waxter and many other experts, is a real child guidance clinic where parents may go for help long before their children are in conflict with the law, or where the schools may come for help with their problem pupils.

The court psychiatrist and the psychiatric clinic, even at its best, is manifestly inadequate. The notion that any expert can diagnose delinquency, prescribe its treatment and expect

successful recovery after seeing a child once or twice, is all bosh. We wouldn't think of calling in a doctor merely to tell us that we had pneumonia and to write down a few medicines for us. We want him to come, and watch until we're well.

Manifestly we must inquire into detention facilities in our own town. It's best to keep boys and girls in their own homes, or with a carefully supervised private family. If we must have the detention home, then let's model it in so far as we can after Los Angeles' Juvenile Hall, whose friendly living rooms have fireplaces, games, books; whose young boarders are given in addition to the usual academic studies such interesting occupations as printing, electrical and radio work, domestic training, writing, illustrating, bookbinding, and even the care of pets.

We need better probation officers, individuals fitted by personality and education for this work, and selected on the basis of merit only.

They are needed by the court, and by the correctional institutions. Let us go on and see what happens to boys committed by the Juvenile Court to the industrial school.

#### THE TRAINING SCHOOL

These are supposed to be re-training, re-educating places. They are actually costly crime schools. We are spending as much money to prepare boys for a career of crime as we might to educate them for medicine or the bar. These schools are costly failures. They are, in fact, the "prep" schools for higher education in expensive state reformatories and penitentiaries.

California spends \$905 a year for each lad she sends to her State School for Boys. We've seen how boys go through



the University of California with a government endowment of fifteen dollars a month. Tuition at Harvard is \$400. Compare this with the \$820 New York spends for every boy in its training school, who then goes on to the Bedford Reformatory, which costs \$719 a year. After that he is all ready for Sing Sing, which costs the people of the state \$368 each year for every convict.

This is only the initial cost of a criminal. Once he is well-trained, his upkeep is incredible. Our crime bill is fifteen billion dollars a year, a sum itemized in terms of misery and destruction, of murders, kidnappings, and robberies.

One out of every forty-two persons in this country is either a convict, an ex-convict, or a criminal with a record of at least one arrest. One inhabitant of the United States is murdered every forty-five minutes. In 1934 our homicide record was 10.7 per 100,000 of population, the highest in the civilized world.

These criminals are young. By far the greatest number of them are between twenty-one and twenty-four years old.

Most of us are vaguely aware that many of the most notorious criminals are graduates of correctional institutions. Yet here is an example of our thinking:

Recently in an Eastern city the juvenile court judge committed two boys to the state's training school. Circumstances brought the decision to public attention. The good people of the town were roused to the boiling point. "Infamous!" they cried. "This is the way we make criminals." Their hearts thumped with rage. The Civic Center passed resolutions. The Women's Club protested. All asking what? That judge's head, of course.

In all that clamor not one man or woman among them raised the question: Why do we maintain out of our own

frayed and flattened pocketbooks any such preparatory school for crime?

They aren't rich, these people. There are more patched linings in last year's coats than silver foxes among them. Yet they were concerned with the well-being and future happiness of these two boys, not with the cost of their term in the training school. This attitude is generous and humane; but it isn't practical. When we maintain, through our own indifference, institutions which fail to save boys from criminal careers, we defeat our own purposes, and the consequent wreckage of lives is even more extravagant in terms of human woe than the stupendous dollar cost.

Now we devised the training school not to punish but to save boys and girls from the back streets and furtive years of underworld life. The Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor made a survey of their results, written by Alida Bowler and Ruth Bloodgood, and published in the spring of 1935. It investigated five representative institutions: the Whittier State School in California, the Boys' Vocational School in New York, the Boys' Industrial School in Ohio, and the Boys' Vocational School in Michigan.

To evaluate the results obtained by these institutions, the Children's Bureau followed up 751 boys five years after they had been dismissed from them. This study was made *prior* to 1932. The boys with whom the experts talked had all been released from the institution by 1926, a period when work was plentiful and funds for social aid comparatively ample.

Here is what they learned:

Court records in 621 of these cases disclosed the fact that 58 per cent of the boys were convicted of crimes after their release.

Even while on parole, 77 per cent of them were unable to

use the vocational training they had received at the institution, although the plan in vogue in each school was, in theory at least, to interest them in some trade and to help them make a start in its practice after they were sent out.

Weekly earnings of 34 per cent of these boys were less than twenty dollars. Indeed, only 10 per cent of this group had reached a wage level of forty dollars weekly, and several in these "higher brackets" made their living in some illegal occupation, such as bootlegging.

Only half these boys were really settled as to residence.

Just 32 per cent were married and living with their wives, and an additional six per cent had married and were already divorced or separated.

A quarter of the boys had remained dependent either on parents, relatives, social agencies, or institutions of some sort, and 24 per cent of those not entirely dependent were only partially self-supporting. A pitifully small number, four per cent, had reached a state where they were not only supporting a family of their own but were also contributing to the support of their parents. Of this tiny group, only eight per cent made primary use of the trade education they had been given by the institution.

In spite of the social life of the school, 61 per cent of the boys had no affiliations of any kind with any religious, fraternal, or social group whatsoever.

In brief, 35 per cent failed utterly to make the hoped-for adjustment to community life; and 33 per cent had made adjustment of such doubtful character as to make it uncertain whether the community would have further difficulty with them.

Now most of these schools look very well as we visit them. Tree-shaded buildings, flower-rimmed. Three hearty meals a

day on tables laid with glistening cloth. Baseball, and clubs, and a band. Shops with entrancing machines. A preacher who tells of a kindly God. A school that is interesting. A crisply aproned cottage "mother" who makes the boys really *want* to brush their teeth and do their beds smooth as a table top.

The trouble is, according to the Children's Bureau experts, the directors of these schools are interested in the schools themselves, not in the world outside. Although their duty is, or should be, to turn the boys out strengthened in stamina, improved in habits, points of view, and energy to weather the difficulties of everyday living, the officials of the institution are more interested—usually exclusively interested—in adjusting them to the routine of the school itself. Emphasis is laid on the boy's life within its confines; not in integrating his activities and education to the neighborhood to which he must return.

This is true in the vocational education given. The schools train not for the boy's aptitudes and the work opportunities of the community in which he lives, but for the institution's own needs.

It is true of the academic education, and of the recreational training. There is no point to directing a boy toward proficiency in some activity he couldn't possibly have a chance to follow when he goes home.

The most serious flaw of all is in connection with their release back into community life. With some few exceptions, the parole work is as inadequate and indifferent as it is in connection with almost all juvenile courts. And it is the most important feature of the institution's service to the boy and to society. The parole officer who watches over and directs the young delinquent after he leaves the orderly confines of

the school is as much a part of the institution's staff as the teacher or the doctor. Only, as a rule, he doesn't function so well, and he never was so efficient to begin with.

Thus we squander lives and money.

The recreational programs planned by the community, for boys and girls who will never get into mischief, get insufficient attention and support from us. They are essential today to our boys and girls with time on their hands. They will become more and more vital to society as time goes on.

They are to the poor and the weak of will as good food and fresh air to the frail. They will do more to prevent trouble for themselves and for us than any corrective machinery after they have gone through the law's red lights.

We set up a program to catch them before they have gone far, to find out what is the matter with them, and to help them travel safely along life's highway. We've let our juvenile courts degenerate far from the fine ideals that went into their structure. We've let our correctional schools exist for themselves, not for the boys.

None of these things improve unless we ourselves, in our own towns, ask questions and make demands. No institution is better than the public it serves.

## *Chapter Five*

### PERSONAL SERVICE

SOME SERVICE STATIONS for youth are privately operated. We will pause briefly to see what three of them offer.

Henry Ford is paying, 1,700 boys to go to school.

This isn't new. Way back in 1916 the automobile manufacturer founded a vocational school, with six boys and one instructor. Today it has a village of bright-faced lads enrolled in a four-year school. This is the plan :

Lads from thirteen to fifteen years old enter. They have their lessons divided, one full week of academic training, one week of shop work. They come to school at seven-thirty in the morning, and are excused at quarter of three.

These youngsters aren't sons of Ford executives, learning the business from the bottom up. They are needy boys, only about 30 per cent being sons of the plant's employees. About five per cent of them are orphans; a quarter of them are sons of widows; 10 per cent of them have fathers too old to work or in some fashion handicapped. The young candidates for the school are sometimes accepted at the urgency of the local welfare agencies; sometimes sent by the juvenile court. Quite a few are boys put into foster homes by the court. Many are from families who, without their weekly pay, would be "on relief."

They earn while they go to school. Mr. Ford pays his students cash "scholarships." Each boy is awarded six dollars a week when he enters, which is quite a wage for a lad of

thirteen or fourteen. This is increased to twenty-four dollars a week as he progresses.

That isn't all. To encourage the pre-depression virtue of thrift, each boy is given two dollars a month in addition to his scholarship. He can't spend this on ice-cream cones or the movies. He has to put it in the bank, any bank he chooses. But he keeps his deposit book in the office at school and an official inspects it to make sure that he saves. We see these files of finger-smearred bank books, boxes and boxes of them. Often the youngsters have contrived to add a few pennies of their own and are accumulating pretty respectable savings.

Mr. Ford isn't going to have any undernourished boys in his school. So each noon a hot lunch is served them in school, free. Altogether the boys earn from \$375 yearly minimum to a \$1,300 maximum wage.

This isn't just a gift. The boys work for it. They manufacture tools and do repair work for the Ford factory. They don't progress at shop work just to learn. They are always working to fill actual orders. Then the factory pays for their products, as this school is not a part of the plant; it is a separate corporation.

It is amazing how little waste there is. Our eyes pop as we wander through the school, which covers three acres of floor space, and see young boys at work at the most intricate jobs. They are, of course, supplied with superb machinery such as no ordinary trade school could afford. To see a lad repairing a micrometer and performing operations which require accuracy to one-tenth of one-thousandth of an inch is, to this writer who can't draw a straight line with a ruler, nothing short of miraculous.

There are only three other similar schools in the world, we're told: one in England, one in Russia, and one in India.

We hear it charged that this is a way of exploiting child labor. We don't believe it. Not with expensive instructors, one-third of the time spent in study, and the time it takes a youngster to make a complicated tool. The unions needn't worry.

These boys are not guaranteed jobs in the Ford plant when they finish their schooling, but only in the dark days of 1933 did any graduates who wanted work there fail to find places. They don't all want to, however. Some go to other companies, some into other jobs, from running fruit stands, to the district attorney's office and even the ministry.

Henry Ford also conducts a fine apprentice school, in common with most great industrial corporations.

He has, in 1935, begun something else. He has cleared space in the Dearborn plant and opened a three-month training school for graduates of the Detroit high schools. These boys are selected four times a year, taken in "on a Ford badge," with wages, and given a general training designed to give them an intimate knowledge of a flivver's interior. We see them overhauling used motors, and getting acquainted with them as they are taught to repair them. They will be taken in as regular employees if they want to be.

Henry Ford is not the only business man alive to the needs of youth. The Rotary Clubs, in their whole national organization, are well aware of these present difficulties, and have been organizing energetically and intelligently to do something about them.

In *The Rotarian* it published a fine index of careers, by Walter Pitkin.

It made an exhaustive study of youth problems in May 1935 and then urged all the 3,847 individual Rotary Clubs to survey their own communities in similar fashion. It asked each local club to appoint a committee sympathetic to youth



and its problems; to select qualified Rotarians in each town to counsel with young men and women; to organize conferences of unemployed boys and girls together with interested adults who will learn how these juniors feel; to arrange further meetings of these adults to discuss the problems raised; to collect information on vocational opportunities in the community; and to direct an educational survey which will bring about better understanding of our economic difficulties.

The Rotary Clubs have fostered and supported bands and orchestras of young people. Here and there some of the clubs have given a hand to homeless boys, our wanderers. They have fostered a back-to-school movement, and made generous loans and given scholarships to keep boys and girls in school. In many localities Rotary Clubs have fostered a rural-urban acquaintance plan, so that country and city boys may understand each other's lives and problems.

This work is quite new for the Rotary Clubs, but they are earnest and eager. As the members usually represent the substantial and constructive elements in the community, it is a movement that holds hope for boys and girls. Rotarians know where jobs exist. They are men who, when they want to, can rally community interest in a practical fashion.

Here are examples of the achievements already on record: The Rotary Club of Meredith-Center Harbor, New Hampshire pays the expense of a music supervisor, thus making it possible for boys and girls to get instruction in vocal and instrumental music. One hundred of them attend these classes weekly.

A number of highly successful youth conferences have been held under Rotary Club auspices in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Omaha, Nebraska. The results have been a better understanding between employers and unemployed youths. In some cases jobs have resulted from the contacts.

The Rotary Club of Columbia, Pennsylvania, is taking an active part in the establishment of a community center for young people who would otherwise have no place for recreation except the streets.

We could go on, giving more of these instances. They are a rainbow in the sky.

Another independent effort to help these young men and women is the creation by the American Council on Education of an American Youth Commission to study the problems relative to the care and education of boys and girls, and to formulate a program, after thoughtful consideration, which will aid them to adjust their lives to the conditions in which they find themselves.

The commission is composed of fourteen distinguished civic and educational leaders. Its temporary chairman is former Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, and Dr. Homer P. Rainey, former president of Bucknell University, directs the work of the Commission. It will study not only the schools, but all the other agencies which touch the lives of our youth.

Here and there individuals have been doing anxious work in this field. Probably no one in the country has performed so important a service as Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. Early conscious of this growing problem, the First Lady was active in behalf of baffled boys and girls long before she left the Governor's Mansion in Albany. From her White House vantage point she has dramatized the situation in such a fashion as to awaken many to its existence and to stimulate thought and action as no person in a lesser place is able to do, a wise service valuable far beyond even her own practical aid.

Here and there, we're thankful to find, the young folks are not quite forgotten.

**PART FIVE**  
**FOR EMERGENCY ONLY**



## *Chapter One*

### FLAWS IN OUR FORMULAE

WHAT IS WRONG with this picture?

We've seen the Federal Government rally to the aid of unemployed youth. We've seen state and local governments ministering to the needs of young people. They've been contributing to the welfare of our boys and girls long before this depression. We've reviewed the social agencies whose whole reason for existence is to add to the health and happiness of young men and women.

Why then do we have so many of our young people sitting with idle hands at home, hanging around the corner garage, crowding the courts—cynical of constructive effort, barren of faith in society and government, innocent of any sense of obligation, and animated only by a blind and unreasoned hope that times will be better—that something will turn up?

Let us analyze briefly our efforts on behalf of our youth. Then perhaps we may formulate some idea for further action.

Here's all this Federal aid. It is giving a little work relief—so little as to be about as effective as an aspirin for tuberculosis. As we have seen, the CCC camps are admirable. However, many of them have not learned the lesson of the War: that we must provide wholesome contacts with girls during the time the boys are away from camp. Some of them are so far away from any but the tiniest villages, of course, that this is impossible. Though we are told at headquarters

in Washington that the various communities do take the boys to their hearts we do not see as much evidence of this as we should like.

The CCC camps do not have the best teachers; they have the best available teachers, many of them from the relief rolls, which often means the least fit, where the best are needed.

Moreover, in their job training, these camps are teaching city boys—for the bulk of them are from urban communities—for rural work. This will detach some of them from their families and friends for work on farms, in forests, and on various kinds of labor on the land. This is all to the good, if they find work they like and can do. The rest take back little of value to them. None of this is very serious criticism of the CCC camps. They do teach boys the use of tools, which is important. They do restore health and morale, a contribution which cannot be overestimated.

They leave the task of finding work for these boys either to the educational directors, who are often active, earnest, and successful at it, or to the boys themselves. We have seen that relatively few have found jobs. Social workers tell us that it takes about three months of job-hunting to reduce the returned enrollee to the same dispirited state in which he enlisted. CCC officials merely "recommend" that when the boys leave the camps they register with the U. S. Employment Service office nearest them.

But the boys have not learned to use employment services. We saw how, in Chicago, of the 3,242 boys and girls interviewed by Miss Anne Davis's investigators, only 268 had tried the state re-employment office, and 205 others had applied to commercial agencies. In Niagara Falls, of the more than 11,000 boys and girls interrogated, only 20 per cent had registered at the local re-employment office.

The Federal Government is also aiding in building good junior re-employment services, which provide guidance as well as work. The guidance idea is very pretty, but when boys and girls get as far as the employment office they want work. It takes a long while to train a town to register available jobs with these centers.

Washington is also aiding with educational help, both in the form of adult education and scholarships for high-school and college students.

It is helping boys and girls to stay in school, an unquestioned benefit, but it has nothing to say about the schools in which they are enrolled. It is setting not even a suggested standard.

Our school system is shamefully lagging. At worst it's an ox-cart on a fifty-mile-an-hour arterial highway; at best it is a 1920 flivver. Some of us are aware of this fact. In New York City, which boasts probably the best public-school system in the country, a two-year study of public education is under way, financed by a \$500,000 grant from the General Education Board, a Rockefeller Foundation, and headed by Owen D. Young, a member of the Board of Regents of the Empire State's education department, the University of the State of New York. The inquiry is necessary, says Mr. Young, "because the parts and factors of every system of education need frequent appraisal in the light of the whole purpose of the system, and because recently the depression has made it imperative to re-examine our philosophy of education."

If we in our own communities reviewed our own school system, we would find first of all that we do not teach our young people to think. There is little from kindergarten to the college valedictory to stimulate boys and girls to cerebral activity, to question and consider the world and the society in which

they live. They are taught facts on end, each in its own air-tight cell. First there's a class in geography; then a class in history. The states, like Virginia and North Carolina, that are rebuilding their curricula in order to teach facts in their relation to a dynamic world are few.

We seem afraid to expose our sons and daughters to anything we regard as aught but the good, the beautiful, the true. Apparently we fear they are so weak and so wayward that the very knowledge of evil will be an irresistible Pied Piper leading them to their inevitable doom.

We do not like to admit that millions of Americans enjoy alcohol, whether an annual January-first Tom and Jerry, or a daily pre-prandial cocktail. We are still inclined to present it as a mortal sin, a slick slide down the Primrose Path, and a menace to health and happiness more fearful and horrid than epilepsy or an incurable tendency to wife-beating. Few states advise, like Pennsylvania, to "teach by use of facts and scientific evidence rather than by emotional exhortation. Avoid arousing curiosity to test effects of smoking, alcohol, or drugs. Appeal to the pupil's desire for fitness in sports, efficiency in play and work, vigorous health, safety to others, and high character qualities." Or practically, like Ohio which suggests that its schools "Investigate occupational regulations against drinking; the effect of alcohol upon the recurrence of accident; data concerning mortality rates of alcohol users; and traffic accidents in relation to intoxication."

Comparatively few schools are willing to concede that sex is likely, in the language of our inimitable forefathers, "to rear its ugly head," in the lives of our protected offspring. We leave the home to impart the most significant knowledge a child can have, and we parents usually wait until our sons and daughters have thoroughly instructed each other in mysterious misinformation.



Certainly we do not inspire them to study cause and effect of economic and social problems. Why the capitalistic system should shudder as with a violent attack of the ague at a critical examination of its processes, we cannot understand. Why, if it is as sure of its inherent virtue and value as it professes to be, should it fear any but the most adulatory examination? No institution is static, and capitalism, which has withstood a great deal of battering, is changing. We cannot understand why it is unwilling to concede this to school-boys. For they'll learn. They'll learn, surely as they find the facts about the stork and Santa Claus.

We are suffering from a fine case of the jitters, cowering in terror that our boys and girls might learn about Communism and Fascism in the public schools; convinced that any teacher who concedes their existence is by that token converted to one of those doctrines and a relentless enemy of democracy therefore.

This is just as likely to create devoted democrats as our experiment in prohibition produced a nation of teetotallers.

This writer herself, far from blind to the inadequacies of our system, who admits she thinks there is only one thing worse than democracy and that is no democracy, can find nothing lovely or desirable in the enslaved masses of the European dictatorships, whether marching to work of the government's choosing under the Red flag, or goose-stepping to labor camps, rakes carried like guns, under the Swastika. The more she sees and hears of life in the workers' government of Soviet Russia or in the corporate state of Fascist Italy, the more thankful she is for the human liberty of our democracy, however lopsided and full of flaws. She cannot see how youthful minds, with the facts set before them, can fail to see the deep spiritual and intellectual beauty of the fundamental concepts of our government.

Ignorance and inability to think on the part of the people are the foundation stones of autocracy. They are being laid in the public schools today, under our own direction, at a time when, if ever, we need an enlightened public opinion. We need to teach our students living facts, and to exercise their minds until they are strong enough to take these facts and to examine them in the light of further facts. We need to relate facts one to another. Then I have no doubt that they will go out, their inherited spirit of independence, their loyalty to the American ideal buttressed by conviction born of knowledge and reason. They will not be ripe and ready for the first dramatic demagogue.

In addition to this reluctance to save youthful minds from premature atrophy, to shield them from the harrowing knowledge of the existence of labor problems, differences in monetary theory, flaws in systems of distribution, etc., the public schools do not take their guidance and vocational training seriously. There is an ever-widening gap between our schools and the world in which their young charges will soon be a part.

On every side we hear fatuous pedagogues say, "We are training for leadership." How awful! Even among one hundred and thirty million people, there can be few leaders. We need training for good citizenship, for responsibility to the neighborhood, the state, the nation, the job.

So some schools have guidance; more do not. At best, vocational guidance is of problematical value in these changing times. At worst, it can be a calamity. We train a boy of accurate eye and precise hand to use precision tools; then along comes a machine which takes away his job.

However, we need guidance; expert guidance. It would serve early in his school life to divert a boy who would be a

good plumber away from the allure of the law, where he would probably, from lack of logic, memory, or reasoning capacity, be an ignoble failure. It would serve to open vistas of occupations undreamed of by the average child who knows only the factory where his family and neighbors work, or the occupations he hears of at home.

Our vocational schools, take them the country over, forgetting for the moment the outstanding exceptions, are incredibly inadequate. Frequently they have as teachers men and women who could never make a living at the trades they teach and who fail woefully to keep abreast of the technical changes always coming along rapidly. The schools are inadequately equipped and usually overcrowded. Moreover, the trade schools go along in their own sweet way without the slightest regard for the work opportunities in the localities in which they are situated.

It is, of course, a mistake to teach boys and girls for a given job. The job may perish; the field may contract as did the demand for petroleum engineers and bond and stock salesmen. It is absurd to instruct a boy in an already badly overcrowded trade. Occupational versatility is the pot of gold today.

Most high schools make no special effort to direct the attention of their students to the vocational and business institutions. They are, on the whole, concerned with preparing them to enter college, although they know that for all but a few hundred thousand of the six million boys and girls in the secondary schools, the last three years of high school are all the education they will ever have.

The schools are frequently non-cooperative. For instance they do not like to bother to find work for youngsters receiving the Youth Administration's six dollars a month, partly

because it is difficult, partly because they resent the fact that the Youth Administration is not their own. They do not cooperate with the agencies handling problems of delinquency or potential delinquency to any practical extent, and yet they are at the source of it. A very large majority of boys with juvenile court records have as their first offense truancy. There is usually some cause for truancy, such as unhappy home conditions, educational maladjustment, poor health, or similar problems which might be helped before they become serious.

Moreover, our public schools are not the democratic institutions they once were. They were designed to provide equal opportunity for all. When a child has no shoes in which to go to school, no carfare, not enough food to nourish him and to enable him to take reasonable advantage of his lessons, he does not share equally an opportunity for preparation for life with the boy in the nice warm apartment house around the corner. When he never sees a dentist, when he cannot have medical care, he is unfit for adequate education, whether he gets exposed to it in the schoolroom or not. It is high time we consider these factors in connection with our public-school system. Some communities have done this. Some school systems have good doctors and nurses; never dentists. Some neighborhoods provide hot lunches. The depression has tended to cause us to call these services frills and fads, however, rather than to see the deepened need for them.

No, the public schools are complete in themselves. They do not see their duties as extending beyond the classroom. Certainly they do not envisage recreation as a part of education. They close their plants, their gymnasiums, their auditoriums, their shops, their art and music classes, with the afternoon bell. School is over. The children may go out to play.

Out to, as we know, the most inadequate recreational facilities. In great cities, the playgrounds are usually the streets, the poolrooms, the dance halls, and saloons. Smaller communities fare better; they have gardens and space. There are comparatively few playgrounds, fewer community centers. The semi-private agencies are left to help and to teach boys and girls what to do with their leisure time.

Where we do teach or give a chance for leisure-time occupations, the hobbies suggested are likely to be time-killers. We have no quarrel with the emphasis on sports. They are wholesome; our boys and girls need better physiques than they have. But for the rest, we fail utterly to inspire interest in some satisfying avocation. Where a man or a woman does a routine job day after day, a hobby that is more than an adult synonym for blowing soap bubbles gives meaning and purpose to life. The odds and bits of cultural pursuits we are suggesting to young people are often silly. A hobby should be another job, at least as absorbing and important as the wage-earning occupation.

At the Tennessee Valley Authority, in the town of Norris, we see distinguished engineers and anemic bookkeepers working together in the trade shops having a grand time making furniture, making metal fireplace furnishings, with all the zest of an artist at work on his greatest canvas.

We know that great men have important hobbies. Einstein is a fine violinist. Thomas Jefferson was a first-rate architect. Charles Lamb was a petty London clerk. Clarence H. Mackay, who made his millions from the telegraph, is an authority on armor and arms.

Edward Bruce, who conceived the idea of Federal help for penniless artists and finally succeeded in getting established in the United States Treasury a much-needed division of

painting and sculpture, was a successful lawyer when he began to paint. He will be remembered for his pictures while his best arguments are already forgotten.

Leisure-time occupations should have the importance of any occupations, and frequently they have the germ of a new job within them. Thus they hold hope as well as the satisfaction for the human need for excellence and individuality. For most of us, our daily chores hold no opportunity for personal achievement; all we are required or permitted to do is to perform a given task accurately and competently. It is in our spare time that we have a chance to exercise that rugged individualism most of us want to see persist in the American people.

The character-building agencies for the most part do not envisage or accept consciously this opportunity any more than the public schools or the public recreational centers.

On the whole, they are institutionalized, existing for themselves, striving toward swollen memberships, fine reports to the board of directors, and to those who have to collect money for their continued existence. They make little or no effort to reach the group of boys and girls in which we have been interesting ourselves. They are afraid of them. These young folks are at an awkward, unlovely age. We ourselves often find it hard to tolerate our youngsters in their teens, and even in their early twenties. They aren't children, and they are not yet adult. They are just a nuisance. So the social agencies, not required to have them around as a family is, do not bother too much. They content themselves by concentrating on the younger and the older groups.

They are frequently a pretty smug, self-sufficient circle of people, redolent of righteousness and superb in their conviction of omniscience. They hide behind their religious affilia-

tions and succeed in making critics feel that they are sacrilegiously attacking God Himself. Social workers, by reason of their occupation, their ability to give or withhold the necessities of life, their obligation to know the detailed history of each individual in their charge, tend, unless they are careful, to develop a patina of conscious virtue, to be wreathed in sanctimonious power. We often see this among the men and women in the social agencies. The impoverished and destitute cannot protest. But the young people do thumb their noses and ignore them. If we want our social agencies to be efficient, we have to see to it that they are staffed with sympathetic personalities. This is especially true of the men. In the past, at all events, social service was not a popular career for the virile type of young man. Yet there is nothing a boy likes better than a leader who can outbox him.

These social agencies are rarely any help with our young delinquents. They regard a boy or girl with a juvenile court or a training-school record as if he were smallpox. This attitude also maintains in the churches. They think the "bad" boy and the "bad" girl are contagious. They'll contaminate all the good little children in their fold. And anyhow, they have plenty of problems without these black sheep. Thus they shut out the young people who might easily be helped to happy useful lives by a sense of "belonging." When they fail, these strays fill that need in destructive gangs.

We do not intend to return here a blanket indictment of every agency. Far from it. As we have seen, many do their work admirably, staffed by men and women of sympathy and understanding, who give their lives generously. Most of them, however, are guilty of this fault: they put their emphasis on the secondary features of education and recreation.

Education is supremely important to those of school age.

The school ranks second only to the home in rearing our citizens. It is not an objective after they have grown. Then recreation is a vital factor in their lives, to be sure. But even then it is not a major factor. The thing our boys and girls want is a job. When they have that, the mainspring of their existence, they will build homes and find their fun. It is nice if we can help them to have recreations which are more than the vicarious excitement provided by the movies and the radio, more than the hectic thrills of alcohol and fast driving. It is urgent that we give them avocational occupations to satisfy their need for activity while they are marking time. But the main thing is the job.

The CCC camps are stopgaps at best, fine sturdy bridges between job-hunt and job-hunt. They could be more. Arthur Young, of the United States Steel Corporation, says he hopes to find good material among these boys. He knows they have been trained to have endurance and joy in their work, both desirable qualities for industry. They would be good candidates for many industries and businesses, if we contrived a contact between them.

Junior re-employment agencies are of no earthly use unless they succeed in bringing the job and the boy together.

Committees on apprentice training are futile unless there are actual openings for apprentices.

Re-training programs are a waste of time and money unless they re-train for work that exists.

One criticism that holds for everything we are doing in behalf of our boys and girls is that it is scrappy and unrelated. Most public schools are not in close touch with the vocational schools. Neither are in touch with actual occupational opportunities. The social agencies do not cooperate with the publicly supported agencies such as the playgrounds, the schools,



or the courts. They do not cooperate with one another. They are often absurdly jealous of one another.

The Federal program fails because it is something imposed from Washington without careful consideration of each community. Its executives are rarely acquainted with the existing facilities. Men and women at work for years in the community itself already have taken a census of the community resources. They are on the spot. They've been in touch with the neighborhood for years.

None of this is the fault of the institutions themselves. It is our own fault. Those institutions are ours. We established them and we support them.

Yet we as citizens have not been taking stock of them, we have made no inventory of their value or their potentialities, of their ability to fill out a theoretical or an idealistic concept, but a need that is here—now—today.

We do not like to believe youth presents any new problems. We see that reflected on every side. We hear one of the executives in that exceptional school conducted by Henry Ford saying, "Nonsense. Boys who don't work are plain lazy." We hear a respected lawyer and politician in a northern Indiana town say, "This generation's all right. These kids are fine. They know what it's all about. They'll take care of themselves. Don't worry." We don't know why he felt he didn't have to worry about his own family. Two of his own daughters regularly slip gin bottles from his liquor closet, and if they aren't empty by the time they're ready for bed, they bury them in the sand on the beach against the next day's thirst. His wife had to go to another city and bully a distant relative into giving their oldest son a job. Try though he might, the lad was unable to find one by himself. Their nephew, whose mother was no such determined matriarch,

had taken "to the road," and hadn't been heard of in seventeen months.

Still, we are sure that once we are aroused to the existence of these problems, we will do something about them. Some of us are already active. Others are doing some concentrated thinking. There is plenty of stimulus in certain groups.

We have always risen to the aid of our boys and girls when their needs finally and fully dawned upon us. We established public schools before we were a nation. We founded juvenile courts, and Y.M.C.A.s. We built swimming pools and settlements. We've been talking a lot lately about "adult education."

However, all we are doing is scrappy, a little here, something else there.

The emphasis is on training and relaxation, without regard for the core of life, the job we train for, and the job we relax from.

Our attention has been centered on palliative measures, tending to make youngsters forget for the moment that they are outside the full stream of living. So they are unreal. They lack blood and sinew.

We have the material here for a first-rate program. We have everything we need, perhaps not in adequate quantity or quality, but that is always true. We need not spend more money. We do need to rearrange, to redirect, to put these various pieces together into a whole, strong fabric.

Let us, then, see how that can be done.

Let's not talk too long about it, either. While we are fumbling, inexorably ticks the clock.

**PART SIX**  
**PLANNED ABUNDANCE**



## *Chapter One*

### HOME REPAIRS

IN FORMULATING ANY PROGRAM, we must take into consideration two facts: the first is that we have a whole generation of boys and girls turned out of school during the depression years either without work at all, or engaged in dead-end occupations, below their training, and without much hope of progress.

The second is: many of these problems are not new; they are merely magnified by the depression.

While we were never before confronted with the fact that industry and business did not want our boys and girls, we have had with us the spectre of technological unemployment long e'er the economic collapse dramatized it for us. We have had an inadequate school system, inadequate guidance and training, insufficient and flabby recreation, for a long time.

The schools will continue to send forth their hundreds of thousands of young men and women armed with their diplomas and their high hopes each June.

We cannot make haste swiftly enough for those 1929 to 1934 classes; the years of their youth are running through the glass.

We cannot plan for those who are in school now, going to school next year, with too much care. Upon them depends our future as a nation.

In the first place, we in our own community must look

into the situation as it exists in our own town. The Federal Government cannot do this for us. No use expecting it to. No use reviling agencies as the Youth Administration. Such feeble reeds are useful chiefly to remind us emphatically that we have been remiss toward our sons and daughters. Our own state capital is not an especially potent agency. Conditions vary from town to town. Here is a situation best dealt with directly, by our own selves, not by any impersonal agency which must operate of necessity with rules and theories.

Suppose we go to the mayor and ask him to appoint a committee to survey the situation. It should be composed of representatives of the largest industries, of the juvenile court, the police department, of the Chamber of Commerce, of the service clubs, of the School Board, the Parent-Teachers Association, the Federation of Women's Clubs, the League of Women Voters, the Community Chest or its equivalent, the Federation of Churches, and a capable educator from the college or university if we have one, the American Federation of Labor and, of course, the newspapers. It should not be a large committee. They rarely do anything but make reports, issue statements, and quarrel among themselves.

The first thing it should do is to hunt jobs, and to list them with the public employment agency. Then tell the boys and girls about it through the newspapers, on the radio, from the pulpit—tell them through every possible medium. We won't need a loudspeaker. It is remarkable how news of a job gets around.

Let us impress upon employers that with them, to a large extent, lies the responsibility for this generation. Business men are people. Even capitalists are human beings, a great deal of propaganda to the contrary notwithstanding. We find

that when we present the situation to them vividly, they are interested, sympathetic, and even responsive.

Business itself has a five-year gap in its own ranks. All during the depression years it enrolled practically no new blood. Even the recruits from the 1935 classes, and, given reasonable prosperity, a normal number taken in from this year forward will not fill that gap. Let us ask industry, for its own profit as well as for the social ends to be served, to consider giving these boys and girls so patiently and hopefully marking time their belated chance.

Let us also see if we cannot help these boys and girls to make jobs of their own. There is always plenty of room for individual initiative even in this machine age. There is work to be done, now as ever. Let us remember the example of Youth, Inc., of the diaper service, of the dog-washing and dog-walking agencies. We deplore their lack of imagination. Let us see if we cannot stimulate it.

That done, let us see what we can do to correlate the various existing facilities into a more potent, more useful agency. First of all, let us see what has been done, by way of example, for this idea is not at all original with us.

The most outstanding example of community cooperation is in the Los Angeles Coordinating Councils, a movement launched in April 1932, when Judge Samuel Blake, judge of the Los Angeles Juvenile Court called together seven hundred officials, police officers, social workers, and representatives of organizations interested in delinquency.

Judge Blake had seen fourteen thousand children hailed into court during the three years before he called his meeting. He contended that the community had a right to be alarmed. He reported that only 14 per cent of these fourteen thousand belonged to any character-building organization, the largest

number being affiliated with the Boy Scouts and the Young Men's Christian Association. With over 85 per cent of these children shut off from wholesome influences, what wonder that poolrooms, the dance halls, the beer gardens, with their unsavory population, are a dangerous attraction to this unstable group?

He found further that almost without exception, the churches had failed in their responsibility to these children, for only 32 per cent signified any religious affiliations whatsoever, the majority of these being among the Catholic and Jewish children.

Let us not deal in generalities. Let us see how one of Los Angeles' sixty coordinating councils was organized. A juvenile police officer had done an unusually fine piece of work in organizing some of the gangs in his district into baseball teams. He found that when boys were busy stealing bases, they were not so likely to be stealing automobiles.

He did not, however, have a great deal of time for baseball teams, so he turned to the Recreation Department for assistance. Here he heard of the Coordinating Councils, and he and a representative of the Recreation Department took steps toward organizing one in their district in the South Side of the city. A representative of the probation department, headed by one of the most practical and able social workers in the country, Kenyon J. Scudder, was asked to speak at a meeting of the South Side President's Council, an organization made up of the presidents of all civic organizations in that section of the city. After listening to the program, it nominated a committee to arrange a local council. The organization meeting was attended by representatives from the Playground Commission, a Business Men's Association,



two high schools, a branch of the Y.M.C.A., the police department, the county probation department, the Chamber of Commerce, the Kiwanis Club, the local district Methodist Church, the South Ebell Club, and the Southwest Parent-Teachers Association.

With this nucleus they built up their council. In general, each council continually studies three sets of facts: The delinquency problems as known by police, probation officers, and school officials. The community assets as far as youth is concerned. The community liabilities or the environmental conditions having a destructive influence on the character of youth. This study cannot be made and finished; it is a continuous one because new factors are always appearing and old ones disappearing. Each council has its own problems and its own methods.

Here is the way another representative council went to work: In a poor neighborhood, with a large foreign population and long neglected by both public and private agencies, a luncheon meeting was called in an old church, closed these seven years. Representatives of service clubs, women's clubs, city council, the board of supervisors, as well as the police department, juvenile court, and probation department attended. The Rotary Club agreed to take the main auditorium and transform it into a gymnasium and basketball court. The Kiwanis Club contracted to take the back room and put into it a craft shop and shower baths. The Exchange Club offered to fit up a two-room shack in the back of the lot for "Cub Packs" and "Pioneers." The Women's Clubs decided to fix up the old parsonage next door for the girls' groups, so they could meet there and entertain their friends.

The whole community went into action and the old "barn-

raising" custom of pioneer days soon had the shoddy place in shape. Gangs no longer race the streets. Five thousand boys and girls are in attendance here every month.

Home environment is always a vital factor. It is hard to reach parents who do not understand or do not care about this. It is not the mother and father who needs it who usually attend Parent Education classes. The Glendale Council devised a plan. A member invited five or six mothers whose children she knew were problems to tea at the home of one of their friends, in their own neighborhood. It was informal, without apparent purpose. Inevitably the talk turned to children. Soon serious questions and discussion were well under way. They continued to meet regularly after that, their numbers steadily increasing. The school principal reports marked improvement in many of their children.

Thus all the groups in a single neighborhood, defined in this city by high-school districts, are gathered, not into another social agency, but into a cooperating group interested not in abstract facts, but in the boys and girls they see every day. The results may be seen in the figures of juvenile court wards. In 1931 there were 3,991 of them; at the close of 1934 it had reduced its numbers of local delinquents to 2,680.

A few cities have begun to copy these coordinating councils. Others have been making surveys of their own activities.

Almost all of them, however, have been directed either toward the delinquent youth or to the unemployed youth. Our concern lies with all of youth. The coordinating council plan might well be used effectively for larger purposes.

We must also look further ahead. Technological improvements will continue to come. Efficiency and management will continue to decrease the numbers of men needed in industrial production. Jobs will be fewer.

There is another aspect to the future. American industry will ultimately, we trust, take measures for increasing its own market by increasing the number of consumers. If it does not do this by lowering prices, and thus increasing purchasing power as Henry Ford did when he made a cheap automobile, labor may force it by demanding increased wages. Shortened hours means more employment, and the past few years, even previous to the hectic flight of the Blue Eagle, have seen progressive cutting of the working week.

This problem is complex as it is vital. We present here no nostrum for its solution. Still one way we can help relieving the glut on the labor market is by raising the school age. Thus, together with the old-age pensions inaugurated by the Federal Social Security Act, we may reduce the numbers of candidates for available jobs.

The school age has been raised steadily for some years. In five states, the maximum compulsory education age has risen to eighteen years old. In seven it is seventeen years, and sixteen years in thirty-one other commonwealths. These attendance laws are not rigidly enforced. The United States Bureau of Education estimates that approximately 27.5 per cent of our huge school-age population is not in school. It is interesting, in this connection, to note that in the five states with the eighteen-year compulsory school law, we find the highest average number of boys and girls in the oldest groups actually attending classes.

Now, keeping boys and girls in school until they are nineteen years old will not solve our problem altogether. It may still be hard for them to find places. The labor market may still be overcrowded. We may have to look ahead to a twenty-one-year-old school population. This will not hurt the boys and girls. Education never did.

However, we will have to make it financially possible for some of them to stay in school. We will have to make school interesting enough for them to remain happily there. And we will have to discourage them from evading the school laws.

Ideally, of course, if the young sons and daughters aren't out accepting low-paid jobs, their fathers and older brothers and sisters will have work, and there will be plenty in the family. Practically, this is not likely to be always true. We will have to consider shoes and carfare and schoolbooks and medical care as part of our system of free public education. There are times when oatmeal and orange juice becomes arithmetic. As we have noted, some communities, and even some states, do this already. The idea is not revolutionary. The Federal Government is helping with its scholarships. We are complaining about these vast sums the central government is spending. If we do not want this money to come from Washington, we must prepare to tax ourselves in our own states.

This money would have to come from the state's coffers rather than from the individual community, for the localities with the greatest needs are usually the poorest, and do not have the money to spare.

Then, as we've indicated, we will have to review our school system carefully. Most eighteen-year-old boys and girls do not want to sit at their desks parsing Cæsar and memorizing the "Idylls of the King." Comparatively few of us are inherently scholars. The bulk of the boys and girls will get restless sitting in the classroom year after year. Education must be related to living.

This means overhauling both the curricula and the teaching methods. It means emptying out the mothballs, replacing the whalebones and bustles with one-piece bathing suits. It

means formulating a workable philosophy of education, suited to a streamlined, air-conditioned era.

This holds for vocational as well as purely academic education. Robert L. Cooley, head of Milwaukee's famous vocational school, and probably the most eminent authority on this problem in this country, bases his training of plumbers and barbers on an ethical concept.

"We must find out," this white-haired veteran of twenty-five years of teaching experience instructs us, "what education is, and what school is for. A school after all is merely an agency to speed up experience. Just as an automobile is not travel, but a means of travel, so a school is not education, but is an agency to speed up progress in the student's early years, to accumulate instruments by which he can live.

"If education is to make an authentic contribution to civilization, it must take people on whatever plane it finds them, ethically, and leave them on a higher plane, ethically. It must take them on whatever aesthetic plane it finds them, and send them out on a higher one, or it has failed.

"We in Wisconsin believe a person must pull his own weight in the boat, or else someone must pull it for him, give him a ride. When you do that, you pauperize him; you strike at his self-respect. Therefore the schools must fit their students to render service. They must train them to participate in the culture of the world they live in, and to add to its inheritance."

Mr. Cooley's school was founded in 1912. It now teaches nine thousand students in the daytime, and nine thousand at night, at an annual cost of \$1,120,000 to the city. It, too, has members of its staff constantly studying opportunities in the city and state, who interpret them in terms of trends and specific jobs to the pupils.

It has made a determined effort during the depression to preserve morale. Thus its barber- and tailor-shop services have been available to its students, for their own improved appearance.

Mr. Cooley does not believe that trade training is separate from culture. Consequently the theatre, the library, the organ, and other cultural facilities of the plant are in constant use.

He regards a school of any sort as a training in democratic institutions. Therefore there is active student participation in the government of the school. Boys and girls elected by their fellows sit in a handsome council chamber behind imposing walnut desks, planning and ruling on conduct, and accepting solemnly their responsibility for making the institution a convenient, comfortable, pleasant place to live in, physically and socially.

Merely vocational education, no matter how ideal, is not likely to satisfy entirely young adults who are eager to be productive. We might well consider ways and means of permitting them to work for use as well as practice in these schools. We have seen how successful this is in the Ford school, where there is a remarkable minimum of waste. We are well aware that this suggestion has been greeted with snarls of rage from both industry and labor when the Relief Administration proposed production for its own use. However, we may well raise the question whether the social and human advantage of such a program might not outweigh the economic argument against it. We might argue further that boys and girls work better when they have a practical objective, and hence come out into the ranks of industry and labor as greater assets to both.

In addition to young men and women who can be held in school by vocational and commercial interests, there is an

ever-increasing group going to college. Junior colleges, supported by the public-school systems, have grown rapidly in the past few years, and given impetus to the trend toward higher education.

There will always be many, however, who will not be interested in either learning for its own sake, or for trade or professional occupations. If we are to keep them in school, we must devise something else.

The CCC camps may be the answer to this. President Roosevelt proposes to make them permanent, but as this book is written he has not yet defined on what basis, for whom, or to what end. A two-year period in the Civilian Conservation Corps might interest many boys bored and restless in school. Developed with really good teachers, plus the present grounding in constructive work programs, it would serve to build a sturdier group of citizens than issue yearly from the junior high and high schools of the more congested sections of America's metropolitan areas.

We needn't throw up our hands, pale, and in a hoarse whisper, mutter, "Fascism." These camps have not been militarized. In the chaotic conditions which surround the establishment of any new venture, and especially in the morass of other mightier problems with which we struggled in their first formative years, the army had a magnificent opportunity to mold these hungry, lonely, bewildered boys into the fascist formula. It did not. In the calmer days we hope are ahead, with the public less distracted, it is unlikely to change unless the entire political and moral complexion of the nation changes too.

Whatever vocational training they may receive either in these camps or in the public schools, let us demand that the guidance is as good as can be supplied.

Let us stop right here and see what the best guidance we know of in the United States provides. We find it in New York State's Vocational Service for Juniors, conducted in conjunction with the New York State Employment Service, for youngsters between fifteen and twenty years old. This service, of which Dr. Mary H. S. Hayes is director, is both a guidance and an employment agency. It tries to fit the job and the boy or the girl together when it can.

We are interested here in its guidance work, as it gives expert advice, help, and encouragement to young people in working out programs for further training suited to their interests and abilities, and for the development of constructive outside interests.

These young folk come here referred by schools, social agencies, hospitals, churches, and private individuals. They want further training in business, professions, trades, miscellaneous occupations as varied as movie writing and conjuring. They want to learn leisure-time occupations ranging from swimming to making hats and the breeding of tropical fish.

What happens to the boy who goes up to these sixth-floor offices? He is received by men and women who are crisp, practical, sympathetic, and far from sentimental. On his first visit, the applicant has a short interview with a counsellor who records briefly his school history, work history, and present situation, and tells him about the testing program.

The next time he comes, he has a test interview. The tests he receives usually include an individual intelligence test, a clerical, and a vocabulary test. There may be also trials for engineering aptitude, manual dexterity, mechanical tests, and examinations for typewriting and stenography.

Before he comes back, the counsellor who talked with him first studies the results of these examinations, reviews his school



records, and consults cooperating agencies that may be of help in planning for him. Then when the applicant arrives, the counsellor goes over with him his present and future plans in the light of all the information which has been brought together.

The next step is the staff conference. Here the counsellor presents a summary of his findings to members of the committee and the staff of the Junior Consultation Service and to representatives of the Junior Employment Offices, who then consider carefully the boy's total situation, and make recommendations or suggestions.

After the staff conference, the counsellor and the youngster plan a course of action. A report of this is made to the referring organization.

If he hasn't satisfactory recreational outlets, arrangements are made for him to enter classes conducted by the Junior Consultation Service.

If he plans some course of training which he is unable to afford, the committee may grant him a small allowance to help with his carfare, materials, or incidental expenses.

Here's what happens in some actual cases. Morgan was an intelligent and engaging boy. But he was too big for an office boy, and too inexperienced for jobs that fitted his size. For months he'd hunted work. Wore out his clothes, lost his courage. The Junior Consultation Service got him a relief job three days a week and an opportunity to learn to repair small firearms, of which he had special knowledge. He is now about to enter the ordnance division of the army.

When Eddy came to the office, he was a slender, friendly lad, eager, red of hair and freckles, pathetic and insecure. His father had been an acrobat in a small circus. His mother, a bareback rider, was dead. Eddy never had had a chance

for regular schooling. Last fall, his father lost his job and came to New York City. Eddy wanted to help his father, and also to finish high school. So the Service worked out a plan for him to go to night school and hunt work in the daytime. However, his father found work, and Eddy went to day school. Fascinated by the chemistry of dyeing, he is making a good school record. Since he has few acquaintances outside the sawdust ring, the Junior Consultation Service is helping him make friends of his own through its dancing classes.

Thus we glean at least a hint, here, of the brilliant way in which these experts guide boys and girls through such morasses which they term, technically, as vocational immaturity, vocational confusion, insecurity, misdirection, and even such common problems as vocational conflict, such as is found in a girl who cannot decide between a secretarial work and art, and vocational fixations, suffered by youngsters who want to become, for example, aviators or movie stars.

The most notable part of the work done by this organization is its interest in directing its applicants to avocational as well as vocational training.

Our local committee, which is to knit together the resources of our own community, will want the schools, the social agencies, the libraries, museums, and whatever else we have to cooperate with the guidance center in directing activity along both financially productive and spiritually productive lines.

No cities, naturally, have New York's rich resources. We all have our schools, however, and Milwaukee shows us how we may utilize them for recreation as well as education.

Milwaukee considers recreation a part of education; it has taken this attitude since 1910 when it made this a department of the Board of Education. This portion of the school-

board's work is directed by one of the most delightful women we meet in all our travels: Miss Dorothy Enderis. To meet Miss Enderis is to be glad you are alive. About her is a homely air reminiscent of Saturday baking in big scrubbed kitchens. We don't wonder that with her motherly direction, the municipal recreation rooms are simply an enlargement of the family fireside.

The plan is simple. The schools are open to the people from attic to cellar every evening. There is no turning them over from one agency to another. The same school board runs them every hour.

At the beginning, when it planned municipal recreation, it did not go and make extravagant outlays. Wisconsin pays as it goes, and does not bond itself for these things. Consequently the cautious Germans and Scandinavians see what they are getting before they open their purses. They took their schoolhouses and made them recreational centers. They took over an old firehouse and an old fieldhouse, for the same purposes.

These centers were first located in the poorest neighborhoods, with foreign-born populations. Shortly, the school board was flooded with petitions from the best residential areas. Even in the earliest days, the program attracted rich and poor. Miss Enderis still chuckles over her memories. Women in bloomers and diamond earrings. The superintendent of a big knitting mill making a handsome walnut buffet, and beside him a lanky traffic cop hammering at a taboret for his daughter's new home, and a gawky youngster sawing at an ironing board, designed to be a present for his ma.

Here is occupation for all ages, entertainment which, under commercial surroundings is certainly undesirable for young people. We don't like to have our sons going to billiard halls

and poolrooms, not because we object to those games, but because there is usually gambling and an unsavory atmosphere about these resorts. If Milwaukee boys want to knock ivory balls around a green-baize table, they can go to the schoolhouse.

Saturday and Wednesday afternoons are movie days. Parents may come with or without children; children may come alone, and never see any pictures designed to tear down the ideas the schools are trying to build up.

Saturday night is dance night. Girls may come and bring their boy friends. Young men may come with their girls. It costs only a dime if you have one, but it is more fun than a public dance hall. The orchestra is first-rate, and you see all your friends.

There are clubs. They take the place of gangs. There's arts, and crafts, and sports, all under the leadership of men selected because they are of a type to influence young men and women. There are father-and-son banquets, mother-and-daughter parties.

One pitfall which many recreational centers fall into, Milwaukee avoids. This is permitting the younger children to get under foot and in the way of the older boys and girls. They don't like it. It's one of the reasons why the generation we've been meeting doesn't like to go to organized centers. The little fry are all over the place. "Kindergarten stuff," a nineteen-year-old is likely to mutter, and be off to the corner hangout. So Milwaukee boys under seventeen aren't allowed the use of the poolrooms. They are invited to stay away from the boxing matches. They have to be at least sixteen before they may go to the dances.

This town sees to it that everybody knows about the fun they can have in the schoolhouses. It tells them through the

newspapers. It never fails to inform them through the school children. It distributes leaflets at factory gates. Some employers put them in pay envelopes.

Naturally, this has its effect in reducing crime. When burglary insurance was going up all over the country, it was going steadily down in Milwaukee.

This, then, is another example of a method for correlating community facilities. Wisconsin not only relates its ordinary schools to its vocational training, but also to its recreational program. It further integrates its system of keeping its young people in school by a set of substantial laws.

Its Industrial Commission is not allowed to issue work permits to minors under sixteen, and those of that age who get them must go to school part time. Since jobs have been scarce, it has issued very, very few. It issued only 662 in Milwaukee in 1934, and only 205 of those for full-time work. There is no exploiting of child labor in this state, little attempt to break this law. Because Workmen's Compensation is double or triple in the case of minors. Therefore employers don't want them. So they stay in school.

There is no exploitation of young people in the name of apprenticeship in this state, either. Years ago it passed a law providing that its vocational schools might give apprentice training. Where an industry itself actually needs them, it makes a contract for a period of years, specifically stating the work, education, time, and pay. This contract, after a three months' trial, must be approved by the state.

It takes time to make laws. But we all have our schools. Still they need not be the only basis for a community program. We also have our parks. When we visit Oglebay Park, in Wheeling, West Virginia, we see how much more useful they might become.

Oglebay Park started as a white elephant. Col. Earl W. Oglebay, a retired Cleveland steel millionaire, settled down to farm in true millionaire style 754 acres of West Virginia hillside. He bred a herd of very snooty guernseys and filled his stables with pure-bred hackneys. He was also interested in the latest ideas in farming, not selfishly. He helped the 4-H movement, and paid for the first farm agent out there himself.

Then, after the way of man, he died. Died and left the estate to the city of Wheeling, which was not so grateful as it might have been, inasmuch as he failed to supplement his gift by as much as a buffalo nickel to keep it up. And it was usually in the red to the sum of \$75,000 a year. The town had three years in which to accept or reject it.

Now, one of the heirs and executors of Col. Oglebay's estate was Crispin Oglebay, of Cleveland, a bachelor whose own hobbies are horses and his gardens. Crispin Oglebay had an idea: that rural and urban people ought to get together and find out that each were people, not menaces. So he went to the Russell Sage Foundation, and also to the Rockefeller Foundation for a plan. He also discussed his notions with Nat T. Frame, then at the University of West Virginia.

He brought a recreation specialist to the estate, Miss Betty Eckhardt, a slim, unruly-locked young woman with the grace of youth incarnate and practical ideas which give the lie to her runaway appearance. He brought a naturalist out, A. B. Brooks. Altogether, he gathered a staff of six full-time experts and four seasonal aids.

Mr. Oglebay then went to the people of Wheeling with his dream. He went to 125 different organizations, from the Lions to the missionary societies. The result was Oglebay Institute, open to anyone and everyone, at a membership fee of anything a person wants to give, from a dollar up.

We arrive at Oglebay Park one raw spring night, and sleep in one of the guest chambers in the old Mansion House. Somebody has placed a huge bowl of wood violets on the bedside table, and lighted the gas grate.

Reluctantly we climb out of bed about six-thirty in the morning. It is drizzling, overcast. We'd like to sleep. We are sure no one will arrive for the bird walk we wanted to see.

We are wrong. We count seventy-one people of assorted ages and conditions. A blind woman who never misses a Sunday. A family of mama, who left home so hurriedly she only rouged one cheek, papa, and three young sons, from about seventeen to seven. Several gangling youths we'd never expect to see off the city streets. Fat little boys, terribly out of breath. They've come, we learn, from a radius of forty miles, And the bird-walk starts at seven.

Miss Eckhardt has pity on us as we stumble out, sodden with sleep. She gives us coffee and cinnamon buns. So we do not start out with the army of naturalists, which, we learn is a mere handful. It is more than likely to be two or three hundred on a good day.

We meet them on a wooded slope, in a natural amphitheatre. Mr. Brooks stops, and all are silent. We can almost hear the sifting of pine needles underfoot. He reads a religious poem with a sincere piety and rare simplicity so moving that it is several seconds before any voices break the stillness. Then he discusses birds, quietly, succinctly. The people ask questions. They tell, with a subdued excitement, what they've seen. Then they move on. One lad with a sweater with so many dropped stitches in it we're afraid it's going to run off him has a notebook filled with really excellent pictures of birds. Under them are strange combinations of letters we suppose look the way the bird notes sound to him. Along the way we find a couple of girls getting excited about

an albino violet. We overhear a conversation between the promotion and advertising manager of a department store and one of the park staff, discussing money and measurements for a new open-air theatre, while his two small sons are begging a part in some play. Ultimately we all wind up before great open ovens where a wonderfully indigestible breakfast is cooking, for the sum of thirty-five cents.

We think this is a splendid idea, because it apparently draws whole families together in a common interest.

On our way back to the offices, we pass a telescope. It was built by a spontaneously enrolled astronomy class. We hear that after this class started, an epidemic of interest in the firmament ran over Wheeling, and as a result eight other telescopes were ground by amateurs, the last and as yet unfinished one being made by a vegetable huckster.

We find, in fact, that every conceivable educational and recreational activity goes on in this park. It isn't just a place to come and play golf, bring sandwiches, pickles, and babies, or go horseback riding if you can afford it, though all those things are possible. The park is a center for both the people of Wheeling and the farmers and miners for miles upon miles around.

It is run at a remarkable minimum of expense. The city's Park Commission maintains the ground, at a yearly cost of forty thousand dollars. Oglebay Institute finances the activities. Its budget is only twenty thousand dollars. This is possible because most of the help is volunteered by the people themselves. The representatives of the various organizations take care of various features. One woman for each day, for instance, is delegated by the women's clubs to be hostess and information office in the museum. And so on.

The activities of the park are manifold. Mr. Oglebay's own most passionate interest is in the tree nurseries. Some of the



trees are grown in the county poorhouse; some in the penitentiary. There are over a hundred arbor days in the state now, where only one or two were celebrated before, inspiring an interest in reforestation in a state suffering badly from erosion and timber losses.

The activities are too manifold to list. There are state fairs, and children's fairs. There are arts and crafts shops. Each season the park officials bring up mothers from the poorest sections of the city, together with their children. There's fun for the mothers, and volunteer nursery experts to look after the children. Harassed and weary housewives are thus enabled to get away from the stove and away from the baby. School busses bring them up.

The museum is closely related to the interests of the town. We saw a Mexican exhibit being arranged. Some beautiful pieces had been lent by great museums; some by the Embassy in Washington. The bulk of the exhibits, however, were objects from Mexico brought by citizens of Wheeling themselves. It is lots of fun to see what your neighbor, who never calls on you, has in her home!

There are camp facilities, several theatres, glee clubs, concerts, all sorts of things.

The reason Oglebay Park is so remarkable is twofold. In the first place it utilizes a public park. Few towns make full use of their parks. Sometimes they have bird-walks or nature classes; more often they don't. Sometimes there's a band concert once in a while. The rich cities have zoos. Mostly these fine-gardened areas are simply there for the people if they want to be outdoors. There is little for them to do when they get there. This park combines education and recreation to the fullest capacity, thanks to the imagination of a man who never lacked for either.

In the second place, and this is even more significant, Ogle-

bay Park is beloved of the citizens of Wheeling and the neighboring towns and countryside because it is theirs. The center was developed through the cooperative efforts of all the agencies of the whole community. Recreation programs often fail because they are superimposed. They are conducted by executives and paid workers who must drum up interest for the opportunities they create. These volunteer workers are their own salesmen. They don't have to go out and make anxious efforts to interest their neighbors. They have furnished the camps, staffed the various buildings, sent their own children on errands, built the craft shops, begged the equipment. Nobody in town could fail to have an interest in it; most of them have given something, whether time, money, or something out of the attic. So they all come: rich man, poor man, miner, priest.

We need not add that after the three years of consideration, the city literally grabbed the property for its own.

Thus this community found the answer to one of the hardest problems we have to face in doing anything for our youth: reaching them and drawing them in. They are shy; they are suspicious; they seem self-contained and difficult. This often repels and discourages the weak of spirit. But they are grateful and enthusiastic once they have been netted.

All of this is important, but, as we have said and said again, it is beside the main issue: the job.

Conceding that during many of the productive years of their lives, there may still be a shortage of work, many thoughtful persons hold that a long-range public works program, designed to benefit the town, state, or nation, will still be needed to take up the slack. It shouldn't be "work relief," which, call it by whatever alphabetical tag you like, still smells unmistakably of charity.

Why should an intelligent, willing, able-bodied young man or woman have to provide a social worker with his whole life's history in order to obtain a few hours of work a week, work which will, no doubt, buy a soda and a movie, but which is so inadequate in wages and in the time spent as to be patently what it is: work for the good of his soul; work without meaning or hope.

No; there is a great deal that needs to be done in our own town. Those playgrounds need to be built, and kept, and staffed. Libraries and museums need more help if they themselves are to function at their fullest. Working mothers need day-nurseries for their children. Our school and park play centers need tending and leadership. Public swimming pools need more instructors and more guards. We could go on down a long, long list of active activities where no machine can ever replace human beings.

There is actual construction and repair work that still cries to be done, in spite of our vast public works and relief work programs. Governor Phil LaFollette of Wisconsin surveyed his state and found there was enough essential work needed to keep every unemployed citizen there busy for the next three years.

We need these things; they pay dividends in reducing crime, which would be an economy in dollars and cents every taxpayer among us would benefit by. And even if it didn't, most of us would rather support men and women, boys and girls healthfully and happily and sturdily at work and play than criminals in jails and prisons, who contribute nothing but destruction and consumption. They pay dividends in a public opinion concerned with the public welfare and not in extravagant group demands such as the bonus or the Townsend plan. They pay human dividends beyond price.

Only if our boys and girls are at work, secured by merit as well as need, on which they will not be retained if they lag, as they humanly do if they know they cannot be fired, and with some opportunity of honor and promotion besides,—only then will they be a stable center for our country in the coming years. Years when momentous problems are sure to crowd upon us, demanding sane and conscientious thought and vote.

Now let us review our plan. We have a problem that cuts across every class, every income-tax classification, and no income tax at all. We have idle, floundering, and unhappily employed boys and girls in vast numbers with us today. We have more and more boys and girls growing up, going to school, leaving school, as we eternally will.

We here believe that Washington and the state capital can give us at the most guidance and the benefit of their superior resources in statistics and surveys and gathered information. This is a neighborhood, a town problem, to be attacked by us who know one another.

We will first care for our most pressing need: jobs for our boys and girls who are idle, or who are laboring down blind alleys. We will do this by canvassing the businesses and industries at hand. We will lay the situation before them and ask them to see where they can find places for these young men and women in their own employment schemes.

We will put our heads together to see in what ways we can suggest and aid the jobless to help themselves.

We will see what employment agencies exist already, and ask for branches of the state employment office to be established in our town if it is possible under the provision of the Wagner-Peyser Act, and try to have a junior re-employment and consultation service set up. This will be possible only

in the larger communities. In the smaller centers, we will have to decide what employment centers to use: the school board, the Y.M.C.A., or the Y.W.C.A., or some similar focal point. We will ask employers who do not hire in such numbers that they maintain their own personnel office to list openings for our young people at these centers. We will secure the best employment experts possible to send them young men and women best fitted for their vacancies.

We will publicize this in every possible way, so that our young people will apply instead of sitting on their doorsteps waiting for someone to bring the jobs to them.

We will promptly endeavor to correlate our local training, re-training, and guidance facilities, suggesting to youngsters who still are willing to go to school, who see the advantages of further education as preparation for work, for better work, and for work which they will enjoy doing because their own abilities potentially fit them for it, how and where and when they may take advantage of these opportunities. We will impress upon them with the utmost emphasis the fact that business and industry are demanding more and more education in their new recruits. And that, moreover, occupational versatility is an asset of inestimable value in a rapidly changing world.

We will correlate all the social agencies at our disposal, insisting that they work closely together, that each boy and girl may be intelligently directed to secure the best the town affords for his particular needs.

We will demand that they make positive efforts to reach these boys and girls.

We will then look at our long-range program, of examining our school system, brushing off the dust of ages, and

remodelling it to fit our boys and girls. We can't have them wearing their grandfathers' ideas much longer.

We will consider the advisability of raising the school age, to the dual ends of keeping youngsters off the labor market, thus making more jobs for them when they are ready and mature; and to giving them more and better equipment to meet the responsibilities and complexities of their adult life.

We will supplement the existing schools with better trade and commercial training, in our provision to keep them happy and willing to remain in school. And we will further consider other forms of schooling such as the CCC camps for those who chafe at either academic or vocational education.

We will oblige our schools and recreational and social agencies to provide them with opportunity to acquire active avocations, which will give them a creative outlet, and so put an end to this vicarious existence on the part of so many of our young citizens.

Finally, we will gravely consider the necessity for instituting a more extended public service, which will provide occupation for them and serve as a civic asset for the taxpayers.

None of this is theoretical. It is not wishful thinking. We have seen all these projects in operation in one form or another in isolated instances the country over. These ideas are the result of our travel and our own observation. They are practical, and possible. They are not even expensive in dollars and cents. They do cost thought, and energy, and cooperative action.

Surely there is an abundance of all of these qualities in America today.

**PART SEVEN**  
**THE LOST GENERATION**





## *Chapter One*

### CROSSROADS

WE HAVE TRAVELLED long among the youth of our land. We have travelled far and wide: from the sun-topped towers of Manhattan to San Francisco's Embarcadero, shrouded in shimmering mist. From Nebraska's cornfields to the Texas range. We have met the boys and girls we went to see. We have listened to their stories, seen how they work, and live, and play.

It is time to cast up accounts.

We have found a problem unique to our times: young men and women with intelligence and personality, with ability and training—and no opportunity to exercise these qualities.

We have found unprecedented unemployment among the young. We have found that unemployment has afflicted them even more virulently than it has their seniors, and that the healing hand of recovery has touched them only lightly.

We know that such adverse economic conditions have been the cause of restlessness and revolt in European youth. Avidly it has swallowed patent medicines for its heartache, and thus poisoned become the backbone of the dictatorships.

The German situation is ever before us. In 1930 there were nearly eight million unemployed in Germany. Apprentices were being dismissed as soon as they finished their training, that employers, themselves impoverished, might hire more

and younger men at apprentice wages. Enrollment in the universities increased, their halls filled with boys and girls learning for want of anything else to do. Forty thousand graduates, educated far beyond the American standards, sat in their homes, in the beer halls, with no hope of ever finding anything to do.

These young adults were still young. They were still healthy and eager. They still had youth's everlasting idealism, its need to serve, its willingness to suffer and sacrifice and fight, if only they might be active in their devotion.

Hitler offered them an outlet for their bursting emotions. We from this distance see them as an army of destruction of all we in this nation believe vital to the good life. We are likely to forget that they were a battalion of youth facing a future without meaning or light, and that Hitler gave them purpose and importance.

In Italy also youth is the strong right arm of Mussolini's Fascism. Bewildered, uncertain young men formed a large portion of the black-shirted troops that took over the government. Many of Il Duce's lieutenants were under thirty at the time of his march on Rome. Since then he has not forgotten the importance of the young. Lads step from the cradle into the Balilla organization, which teaches them to march almost before they can creep. Never a day from thence forward does the dictatorial grasp relax.

Russia too has marshalled its unwanted youth, stranded by famine and revolution. We remember the nightmare stories of the besprisyryni—the homeless children, a half-million of them, savage little vagabonds wandering over the land, stealing, begging, drinking.

These wild children were ultimately taken into camps, made one with the rest of Russian youth, all dedicated now

heart and soul to the government which took them in, gave them work, made them a part of its far-flung program.

Which of these groups do unwanted young Americans resemble? Whither will their plight lead them? We set forth to examine and to assay if possible the character of the mutiny against their destiny buried in the breasts of our own unwanted boys and girls.

We never found revolt. We found nothing but a meek acceptance of the fate meted out to them, and a blind belief in a benign future based on nothing but wishful thinking.

We are not reassured. We cannot regard this patient waiting as aught but temporary. We have never been a nation of submissive cattle. Resignation has never been one of our characteristics, and we do not expect it to be developed very definitely in this generation.

Were it so, we should mourn, for this would hold as deep a danger as a passionate desire for revolution in a dynamic world.

This lack of revolt is more ominous than active radicalism, to our mind. Those potential Nazis were not protesters. They were merely sitting, enduring, quiescent. They were unaware of the fact that they were waiting for a leader to galvanize them into action. Youth doesn't think these matters out consciously, for itself.

Hitler did not arise overnight. For years, we remember, he declaimed and exhorted the German people.

In this country we can find no trace of any such magnetic messiah, for which we may give profound thanksgiving. The more conspicuous demagogues here have not studied Europe's lesson. They have made their appeals to old age, to cupidity, to hate, not to youth with its patriotism and its need to serve.

That leader may yet come. But the depth of his menace

and the extent of his power is something we may control, if we will.

This generation has important assets. It is making some significant contributions to our life.

First and foremost is courage. Courage to do the work at hand no matter how trifling. These boys and girls see no labor at all as belittling regardless of their class and standards. They have no false pride, no self-importance.

Their sportsmanship is gallant. They neither whine nor whimper. "Smart cracks" shell fear and disappointment.

They have not conceded defeat, and they will not admit cynicism into their minds as they regard established institutions.

With them the basic social unit, the home, is safer, we think, than it has been in a long time. When they are able to marry, they value it; marriage is not as light a matter as it was in the easy-money era. With a code of practical premarital morality, they are losing sentimentality even while they retain youth's inherent romance. Because they have a deep need for emotional security, they are founding their families on enduring rock.

Their honesty makes a beginning toward a system of ethics related to practical experience and not to any taboos they know have no more relation to twentieth-century American than rain-makers or love potions. Their conclusions may be the same as their forefathers, but their reasons for adhering to them are based on experience. They are honest not because of a vague code handed down from father to son but because they know they need a sound basis for their relations with one another. In this they differ from our own post-war generation which rebelled against all old rules merely because they were old and they were rules.

These boys and girls we have been encountering from the rolling Alleghanies to the rugged Sierras know the golden calf for what it is. Money is not their yardstick. They are free from the snobbery of things.

Add to this the strength, the ebullience, the high spirit of the youth they still have, untarnished on the whole by any prescience of lasting defeat, and the fact that they have not lost their will to work or their desire for progress.

These are substantial assets in a people.

The list of their liabilities is food for thought. We have been discussing their apathy, which, once a sense of defeatism possesses them, makes them malleable material for a demagogue with an answer.

They are without faith and without belief. They are skeptical of the old-fashioned religions and the rewards of the old-fashioned virtues of thrift and industry. Their lives are without spiritual meaning. Youth wants to believe. A crusader, however subversive, who reveals to them a cause might find them ardent converts. The only reason we can find why Communism is not the menace it is advertised to be is that its proponents have not adapted it to the American mind and the American need, or phrased it in American terms. This is dangerous. It may find advocates not so stupid.

This generation does not think. While the level of intelligence is high, it is atrophied with inactivity. These young men and women do not think for themselves. They take what they like of what they hear, and reject by instinct rather than by reason. We need no clairvoyant to foretell what this tendency might mean under unscrupulous leadership.

They are utterly lacking in any sense of responsibility toward the conduct of this nation. Yet few of them are barren of that patriotism, that love of the homeland, that sense

of possession of country which resides in normal human beings. Let someone translate that patriotism into a new philosophy and convince them of their obligation to the nation and the flag—he would not have a hard time. These young people have no old ties to slough off.

They want security. Isn't that what the dictators all promise? Don't they all guarantee freedom from want and woe, rest on the broad breast of the state?

Our boys and girls are not thinking of these things. They hear the economic problems discussed in terms of abstract principles, complex governmental activities. They are too hard for their unexercised minds. They laugh them off. They have personal problems, close and bitter. They evade them also, drugging themselves with vicarious amusements, with the escape media of movies, radios, fast motors, and alcohol. This does not add to their stability and their reliability.

They do know the older folk, the men and women who control the country today, are unaware of their problems. Their elders are contemptuous of them because they do not bring to life the versatility and the initiative which was characteristic of our people when there were still new frontiers, more space, more land, more opportunity for individual expression in the economic system than they see clearly for the moment.

We do not concede that there are no more frontiers. We believe that there is a whole world of work in fields of personal service as yet untouched, and whose existence no machine will ever challenge. We believe that we need not be dominated by the factory job. The girl who went home to the farm when the factory shut down in 1932 is happier selling the flowers she has weeded and watered in her garden and carried to her crossroads stands than ever she was stand-

ing all day long before a machine. We believe that there is a rich new world of culture and beauty and conservation to be explored by our citizens. But habits of mind and attitudes are hard to break. These things are just now rising above our horizon. For the first time they are beginning to have significance.

Still, the older generation does not fully grasp this, and the young folk are left to struggle with the traditional concepts, to modify and to change them without much sympathy or understanding.

This generation is straying aimlessly toward middle age. Soon it may be altogether lost. Then we as a nation will face a future dominated by a defeated citizenry, with nothing to lose and willing to try anything. It may be there will be nothing for it to try. It will remain then, a decadent, vitiated generation, a cancer in the vitals of our people, rearing its children in its own dun and dreary twilight.

These boys and girls are our responsibility. If we do not promptly assume it, some self-appointed piper may take it from us, and lead our youth God knows where.

This army of outsiders is not an abstract issue we can leave the politicians or the professional planners to deal with. These boys and girls are *ours*. Under prompt, competent handling, they may yet be transmuted into normal, busy, productive men and women.

Remember—this army moving with the shuffling feet of the faithless is our future—and mayhap our retribution.





# INDEX

- Abbott, Grace, chief of Children's Bureau, Department of Labor, 250; transient service the outgrowth of her and others' demand, 251
- Agricultural Adjustment Act, 208
- Agricultural Adjustment Administration, 197
- Agriculture, Department of, its constructive work among young people, 257; the 4-H clubs, 257; Rural Life Association, 257
- Albright, Main, head of North Carolina student council and leader of Young Democrats, 42, 43; finds drinking more orderly now than formerly, 151, 152
- Alger, Mrs. Frederick M., of Liquor Control Commission, 63
- Allied National Agencies, provisions made for care of runaway boys by, 246
- Amalgamated Clothing Workers, one of best unions, 177, 178
- Amberg, Harold, general counsel of First National Bank in Chicago, 196
- American Telephone and Telegraph Co., during depression, 190
- American Youth Commission, its leaders and purpose, 318
- Apprentice Training. Federal Committee on, set up in addition to the NYA, 256
- Aswell, H. L., Virginia curriculum adviser, 275
- Baker, Newton D., member of American Youth Commission, 318
- Balch, Joe and Edy, at work on a housing development, 18-20
- Barrington Hall, University of California, 117
- Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, 192
- Bauer & Black, 197
- Blake, Judge Samuel, of Los Angeles Juvenile Court, 339
- Bloodgood, Ruth, investigator for Children's Bureau, 310, 311
- Borden, James, Knox College graduate, 104; an example of caution of youth today, 104
- Bowler, Alida, investigator for Children's Bureau, 310, 311
- Boys' Industrial School (Ohio), 310
- Boys' Vocational School (Michigan), 310
- Boys' Vocational School (New York), 310
- Brannan, Charles F., head of Chicago Young Democrats, 51
- Brooks, A. B., naturalist, 354
- Brown, Nancy, of *Detroit News*, 63
- Bruce, Edward, and U.S. Treasury division of painting and sculpture, 330, 331
- Brüning régime, German youth under, 36, 37
- Bryan, Mrs. Joseph, III, on minimum requirements for a debutante, 110, 111
- Buffalo Museum of Science, 294
- Bullock, A. E., head of Los Angeles Metropolitan High School, 269-271
- Burroughs adding machines, 197
- Butler, Aldis, Dartmouth undergraduate, 75
- Butler, Samuel, *Way of All Flesh*, 108
- Cabell, James Branch, 109
- Cabot, Judge Pickering, 296; views on probation, 304
- California, University of, 38, 39; Social Problems Club of, 45;

- communal housekeeping at, 46, 116-118; report from employment office of, 197
- Camerer, Arno B., director of National Park Service, 240
- Cannon textile mills, 186
- Catholic Welfare Council, 287
- Catholic Youth Bureau, functions of, 287
- Chicago, University of, 38, 39; interview with student on Communism, 40; lunch-time conversation of students, 40, 41, 119, 120; its best recruiting season since 1930, 197
- Children's Bureau, its investigations of training schools, 310, 311
- Ching, Cyrus, of U.S. Rubber Co., on education required of employees, 179; on employment of younger boys and girls, 200
- Churches, 68-71
- Civilian Conservation Corps, the youths the President was most anxious to help, 235; pioneers building in American frontiers, 235; how these camps are regarded, 236; the case of Carl, 236-239; no militarizing of these boys, 239; cause of success of, 239; men, how selected, 240; requirements of enrollees, 240; office of War Department in connection with camps, 240; forestry work directed by Department of Agriculture, 240; competent direction essential, 241; average length of stay of boys, 241; service voluntary, 241; how counseled when they leave, 241; cost of, 243; estimates of Federal department as to value of their work, 243; what the boys have learned, 244; their teachers, 322; important things accomplished by, 322; employment agencies not used by the boys, 322; proposal of President Roosevelt to make the camps permanent, 347
- Cleaning and dyeing, opportunities in, 211
- Clemson Agricultural College, its studies of attitudes of high-school students toward farming, 204
- Cleveland Public Library, 295
- Coal mining, 217
- College and college students. *See* Education
- College Topics*, 10
- Collier's Weekly*, article on vagabond population, 250
- Collinwood School fire in Cleveland, 263
- Columbia University, 38, 39; no influential radical group at, 46
- Community Chest contributions, 289
- Community coöperation, what must be considered first in any program, 337; a consideration of the situation in our own town necessary, 337; appointment of a committee for this purpose essential, 338; the first need, the finding of jobs and listing them with the employment agency, 338; enlisting coöperation of employers, 339; an outstanding example of, 339; Glendale Council plan for, 342; raising the school age to remove the glut in the labor market, 343; making the school interesting, 344; discouraging pupils from evading school laws, 344; money not supplied through Washington must come from state taxation, 344; overhauling of curricula and teaching methods, 344 (*see also* Milwaukee, Oglebay Park); a review of a plan for, 360; a problem cutting across every class, 360; the most pressing need, 360; a glance at a long-range program, examining into the school system, 361; a consideration of advisability of raising the school age, 362; supplementing of existing schools with better trade and commercial training, 362; a consideration of other forms of schooling, such as CCC camps, 362; arranging opportunities for acquiring active avocations, 362; consideration of

- a more extended public service, providing occupation and serving as a civic asset for taxpayers, 362
- Conway, Dirk, messenger boy in a western bank, 16, 17, 103
- Cooley, Robert L., head of Milwaukee Vocational School, 345; on training of young people, 346
- Cooper, J. D., of Youth, Inc., 63; his comments on the organization, 64
- Copper mining, 218
- Costigan, Senator Edward P., 51
- Coughlin, Father Charles E., 51, 96
- Crawford, Ben, football player and honor key man, 36, 37, 138
- Creel, George, 52
- Dartmouth College, 38; radicalism at, 46
- Davenport, Walter, on our vagabond population, 250
- Davidson, Dr. D. G., psychiatrist, 302
- Davis, Anne, study of, under auspices of University of Chicago, 127; agencies not well regarded by young people, 127; how jobs were secured, 127; response to question as to choice of work, 128, 129; figures as to time spent in libraries, 139; as to visiting parks, beaches and clubrooms, 140; of attendance at settlement houses, including Y.W.C.A., Y.M.C.A. and Jewish People's Institute, 140; library books read, 140; what do they do? 140; figures produced by survey under, which provoke thought, 289; further reference to study of, 294
- Dearborn plant, of Henry Ford, 316
- "Depression University," Homestead, Pa., 294
- Detention, houses of, for juvenile offenders, 297, 298; forms of punishment, 298; Los Angeles Juvenile Hall, 308
- Deutsch, Dr. Monroe, vice-president University of California, 45
- Dial telephone. *See* Technological unemployment
- Ditto Corporation, 197
- Doctors. *See* Professions
- Domestic service, great boom in, during depression, 212; a major occupation, 212; stigma it carries, 213; hours, 213; not improved in years 1930-1935, 213; falling in standards, 213; the very young victimized, 213; result of questionnaire and survey in Richmond, 213, 214; regulations or standards for labor in Wisconsin, 214; efforts to find what standards are used in agencies conducted by Women's Bureau, Department of Labor, 214, 215; few standards for service among the girls, 215; efforts to raise the calling in Concord, Mass., 215
- Drinking today, a "beefsteak fry" in Denver, 146, 147; a picnic of high-school boys and girls near Wichita, 148; a Park Avenue cocktail room, 148; St. Francis and Palace hotels, San Francisco, 148; at sporting events, 148; announcement of Federal Treasury as to money spent for alcohol, 149; reports from distillers and brewers, 149; proposals for combating, 149; a trend on the Eastern seaboard toward constructive control, 151
- Du Pont, two undergraduates of this family shy of accouterments of wealth, 111
- Eastman Kodak Co., 197
- Ecker, Don H., director New York University Student Union 93n.
- Eckhardt, Betty, recreation specialist, 354
- Economics, as front-page material, 49; in the movies, 49; over the radio, 50; increased interest of young people in, 50, 51; waning interest in causes of economic

- and social disasters, 52; mounting irritation at cost of maintaining underprivileged, 52; opinion of high-school senior on New Deal, 52; attitude of needy, 52; contrast to this attitude in Iowa, 53; comments of a young farmer, 53, 54; reason for clear thinking on part of Iowans, 54; an instance showing consciousness of city laborers of their particular problem, 55; quotation from *Pittsburgh Press*, 55; the importance and obligations of Iowans clarified by their leader, 56
- Education, conviction of youth of today on, 114; scholarships, 114; hardships, sacrifices and economies of students, 115, 116; summer activities of students, 117; Barrington Hall, 117; Sheridan Hall, 118; result of a survey at Pennsylvania State College concerning government scholarships, 119; the sort of youth the colleges are turning out, 119; student toilers lacking in personality, 120; increased enrollment of students at state universities and land-grant colleges, 122, 123; avid thirst for education not universal, 123; various reasons for leaving school, 123
- Employment agencies, how regarded by job-hunting young people, 127, 128; studies by Anne Davis of, 127, 128; those who make use of, best educated and best equipped, 128
- Enderis, Dorothy, director of recreation in Milwaukee, 351
- Erwin, Clyde, superintendent of education in North Carolina, 277
- Farming, 202-205; attitude of rural youth to, 202-204; diversification of, during depression, 209
- Fechner, Robert, director of CCC, 239; his advisory council, 239, 240
- Federal Emergency Relief Administration, transient service of, 247; increase in size of shelters, 247; visit to a typical one, 247; men not obliged to enlist in camps established for them, 248; these camps compared with the CCC, 248
- Federal government, aid to unemployed youth, 321; aid in building good junior reemployment services, 323; help in adult education and scholarships, 323; why its program fails, 333
- Federal Housing Administration, 197
- Feland, F. R., on opportunities for young people, 192; how their selections are made, 198, 199
- Find-a-Job Club, 62
- Fish, Hamilton, 42
- Ford, Henry, plan of, for sending boys to school, 314, 315; apprentice school of, 316; his Dearborn plant, 316
- Forestry work, 216
- 4-H Club, 257
- Frame, Nat T., of University of West Virginia, 354
- Frank Wiggins Trade School, on recent placing of students of, 198; purpose of, 266; number of students, 267; minimum age, 267; background essential, 267; its advisory school committee, 267; students trained for actual jobs, 267; diplomas given *after* six months of successful wage earning, 267; information on graduates kept, 268; value of this, 268; classes of varying length, 268; waiting lists heavy, 268; reason for large number of applicants for admission, 269; the needs of the depression met by a retraining program, 269; an illustration, Blair Lord, 269; reluctance of, to train where there are few jobs, 269; preparations of, to teach building trades, 269; facilities of, for aiding employed and unemployed in keeping up to

- date in their trades, 269; equipment and staff, 269
- Frayser, Mary E., study directed by, on attitudes of high-school seniors toward farming and other vocations, 203, 204
- Freeman, Dr. Douglas, comments of, on young people today, 36, 75
- Future Farmers of America, purpose of, 258; achievements of, 258; two illustrations, 258, 259
- Gardening, opportunities in, 211
- Gardner, Gov. O. Max, North Carolina system of taxation overhauled under, 274
- Garrison, Lloyd K., dean of University of Wisconsin Law School, quoted, 224, 225
- General Electric Co., employment policy of, 176; famous for its apprentice school, 183; during 1932-1933 no graduates taken into employ of, as potential technical and executive experts, 190; 1935 college graduates engaged by, 196; its recent employment of young people without previous experience, 196; its employment of 1935 graduates rather than those of 1932, 198
- General Motors Corporation, policy of, 176
- Gibson, Bud, a type of student more common than formerly, 122
- Glueck, Prof. Sheldon and Dr. Eleanor T., study of juvenile delinquents by, 296
- Gold mining, 217; conditions at Oatman, Arizona, 217
- Good, Mrs. Paul, 40
- Government service, how viewed by youth today, 106
- Graham, Dr. Frank, president, University of North Carolina, 42; a leader in his sphere, 97
- Grant, W. T., department store, search for men to work up, 197
- Groves, Prof. Ernest R., courses of, in legal, psychological, sociological, and physical problems of marriage, 92
- Haddock, Phil, radio artist, 129, 130
- Hall, Sidney B., Virginia state superintendent of public instruction, 275
- Hart, Schaffner & Marx, division of work of, under agreement with Amalgamated Clothing Workers, 177
- Harvard Crime Survey, study of juvenile delinquents, 299
- Hathaway, Clarence, editor *Daily Worker*, 45, 72
- Hawkes, Dean Herbert E., 46
- Hayes, Dr. Mary H. S., director New York State Vocational Service for Juniors, 348
- Hero-worship, 95-97
- Homestead, Pa., "Depression University" at, 294
- Hopkins, Ernest Martin, president Dartmouth College, 47, 97
- Hopkins, Harry, chief Federal Emergency Relief Administration, 252
- Huff, George, athletic director, crusade against drinking in University of Illinois stadium, 149
- Hutchins, Robert Mavnard, president University of Chicago, 97
- Illinois, University of, a girl typical of American womanhood at, 120, 121
- Industrial school, the, 308; these schools costly failures, 308; only the initial cost of the criminal, 309
- Insull, Samuel, 74
- International Harvester Co., 126; attitude toward its employees, 176, 183
- International Machines Corporation, 197
- Janson, Lieut. Richard, of a CCC camp, 237
- Jewish Welfare Board, its various

- departments, 286; activities of, 287; resembling Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., 287; additional interests, 287; its keen interest in problems and culture of the day, 287; subjects discussed at its conferences, 287
- Jobs and job hunters, development of persecution complexes because of inability to find work, 153; case of lad in St. Louis, 153; placing of blame on parents, 153. *See also* Youth of today, 126ff.
- Jonas, in a Georgia transient camp, 13
- Juvenile courts, 295; study of 1,000 delinquents, 296; what is wrong with them? 297, 298; "delinquent day" in Philadelphia, 299-302; what comes before the court-room, 302, 303; a comparison of the Philadelphia court with the Boston Juvenile Court, 303; four points which emerge from surveys of, 305-307
- Juvenile delinquency, 141, 142
- Kepecs, Dr. Jacob, on youth as not naturally immoral, 82; finds labor market for young better since abolition of NRA, 184
- Kellogg cereal plant, permanent six-hour day and eight-hour wages made by, 175
- Kennon, John, in charge of placement office, University of Chicago, 197
- Kirkpatrick, E. L., on attitude of young people toward farming, 204
- Kummer, Clare, director of Children's Bureau, Memphis, 98, 99
- La Follette, Gov. Philip, survey of work to be done in Wisconsin, 359
- Landis, James M., chairman of Securities and Exchange Commission, 44
- Laundry, opportunities in this business, 212
- Law. *See* Professions
- Leisure hazards, 279; what the settlement houses are doing, 288. *See also* Catholic Youth Bureau, Jewish Welfare Board, State. Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A.
- Levin, Solly, of a New Mexico camp, 17, 18, 35
- Libraries. *See* State
- Lindsey, Ben, 52
- Literary Digest* "College Peace Poll," 99-101
- Long, Huey, 5, 51, 96
- Los Angeles Coördinating Councils, 339; how one of these was organized, 340, 341
- Lost generation, the, of the 1930's, 4; products of a psychopathic period, 4; earliest memories of, 4; their adolescence, 4; what they have witnessed, 4 (*see also* Youth of today); how they have been affected, 5; the youth of other lands, 5; practical methods for finding facts, 6; where these young people may be found, 6, 7; not only the children of the unemployed affected, 9, 10; optimism of, 57, 58; their willingness to do any sort of work, 59; an example, 59, 60; their reliance on help in getting jobs, 61; jobs invented by lads with imagination, 62; Find-a-Job Club, 62; Youth, Inc., 62-64; unprecedented unemployment of the young, 365; the young more virulently affected than their seniors, 365; restlessness and revolt of European youth before us, 365; the German situation, 365; Hitler's offer an outlet to the bursting emotions of youth, 366; in Italy, the youth the strong right arm of Mussolini's Fascism, 366; the unwanted youth in Russia marshaled, 366; which of these groups does young America resemble? 367; lack of revolt on the part of our young people more ominous than active radicalism, 367; no trace of a leader here, 367; important assets of, 368; compared with the

- post-war generation, 368; their liabilities food for thought, 369, 370; these boys and girls not an abstract problem but our own responsibility, 371
- Lubin, Dr. Isador, commissioner of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 173; a situation raised by, 174; 1929 study by, 174-175; his conclusions as to absorption of dispossessed workers, 175; trend toward lengthening hours seen by, since NRA was declared unconstitutional, 175; opinion of, as to chances of young as heavy industries develop, 179; assertion of, that there is no actual shortage of skilled labor, 182; as to the pick-up on service and consumer industries, 211; statistics of, on nonferrous metals, 219
- Mack, Judge Julian, of Juvenile Court, 295
- Macy, R. H., & Co., 189
- Major, Duncan K., Jr., of War Department, 240
- Marriage, courses in problems of, instituted by schools and colleges, 92ff.
- Marshall Field & Co., 197
- Mathews, Shailer, 44
- McGrady, Matt, of the paper box factory, a misfit, 28-30
- Mencken, H. L., 109
- Metropolitan High School, Los Angeles, a post-secondary-school business training course given at, 269; requirements for admission, 270; its placement service, 270; its studies made exciting, 270
- Miller, Mabel L., 63
- Milton, Mary Lee, an instance showing fear of change and chance in youth of today, 105, 106
- Milwaukee, recreation considered a part of education here, 350; municipal recreation rooms in charge of Dorothy Enderis, 351; occupation and entertainment furnished by, 351, 352; one pitfall avoided, 352; effect of these measures in reducing crime, 353; work permits not issued to minors under sixteen, 353; no exploiting of child labor or in the name of apprenticeship, 353
- Milwaukee Vocational School, 345-346
- Minneapolis Public Library, 294
- Monroe, George, student at Kansas State College, 204, 205
- Morehouse, Jed, an example of attitude of youth today, 27, 28
- Morgan, J. P., & Co., 197
- Moseley, Nicholas, his description of Meriden schools, 265
- Movies, 133ff.
- National Probation Association, survey of, 296
- National Recreation Association, 293
- National Youth Administration. *See* Youth Administration
- Nebraska, University of, 121; on attitude of young people toward farming, 204
- Nelson, Thomas H., lecture to Educational Council, 284-286
- New Rochelle, N.Y., Public Library, 295
- Newark Museum, "Hobby Shop" of, 294
- Norris, George, 52
- North Carolina, University of, "Our New Deal University," 42; student loan fund of, 120; on placing of 1935 textile graduates, 197
- Oatman, Ariz., a gold-mine village, 217, 218
- O'Connor, W. J., on American Telephone & Telegraph Company, during depression years, 190
- Oglebay, Crispin, plan of, 354; and Oglebay Institute, 354
- Oglebay, Col. Earl W., retired Cleveland steel millionaire, 354; bequest to city of Wheeling, 354

- Oglebay Institute, activities financed by, 356
- Oglebay Park, a visit to, 355, 356; activities pursued at, 356; a center for people of Wheeling, W. Va., and farmers and miners for miles around, 356; activities of, 357; reason it is so remarkable, 357, 358; answer to one of hardest problems we have to face, 358
- Ortega y Gasset, José, 286
- Otto, Dr. Max, "Ideals and Character" of, 76, 77
- "Pack Horse Library," 294
- Peck, Lillie M., secretary National Federation of Settlements, 288
- Pennington, Mrs. Blanche, chief of W.C.T.U. department of non-alcoholic products, 150
- Perkins, Frances, 1930 estimates of unemployed boys and girls sixteen and seventeen years old, 168, 169; on the dial telephone, 191
- Persons, W. Frank, of Department of Labor, 240
- Peters, D. W., Virginia director of instruction, 275
- Pfeif, G. H., supervisor of personnel of General Electric Co., 176; on situation in this institution, 183, 184
- Picatti, Tony, on the Youth Administration, 31, 32
- Pickering, Mrs. Catherine Yates, 63
- "Pietraskiewicz, John," 144, 145
- Pitkin, Walter, index of careers by, 316
- Pittsburgh *Press*, quotation from, 55
- Price, Gerard, administrator of FERA in Kansas, 248, 249
- Procter & Gamble, 197
- Professions, conditions in teaching, 220-223; certain objectives which should be considered seriously, 224; law, 224, 225; unemployment among young lawyers, 226; results of a questionnaire, 226; incomes in the early 1930's, 227; present incomes, 227; doctors and dentists, 228-230; veterinary, 231; their chances better than those in other callings, 232
- Radicalism, among youth today, 38; a search for, at prominent universities, 38; the vast majority of students not crusaders for the New Day, 39; at University of Chicago, 39-41, 73; at University of North Carolina, 42-44; at University of Virginia, 44, 45; at University of California, 45; at Columbia University, 46; Dartmouth College, 46, 47; views of a young man in Bramwell, West Virginia, as to Communism, 72, 73
- Radio. *See* Youth of today
- Rainey, Dr. Homer P., member of American Youth Commission, 318
- Red Menace, a search for, at universities, 38-47
- Reporter, leaves from notebook of a, 8; interview with Murat Williams of University of Virginia, 10; in the Carolinas, 11, 12; in a Georgia transient camp, 13; the case of Jonas, 13, 14; Tom Cary Stonehill of Nashville, 14-16; Dirk Conway, messenger boy in western bank, 16, 17; Solly Levin, of a New Mexico camp, 17, 18; Joe and Edy Balch, Kansas, 18-20; shack town near Salt Lake City, 20-21; case of Eddy Zaniewski, Polish miner, 21; Jed Morehouse, example of attitude of youth of today, 27, 28; Matt McGrady, of paper box factory, 28-30; Tony Picatti, Youngstown, opinion of the Youth Administration, 32; interview with Chicago barber's daughter, 34, 35; interview with Ben Crawford, in Union, S.C., 36
- Reynolds Tobacco Co., 178
- Rickert, Dr. U. Garfield, 229
- Roche, Josephine, 51
- Rockford, Ill., *Morning Star*, 80



- Roosevelt, Mrs. Franklin D., study of problems of youth of today by, 318
- Ross, Charles G., Pulitzer prize winner and editor of *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 171; on solving of our problems through return to prosperity, 171
- Rotarian*, index of careers published by, 316
- Rotary Clubs, activities of, 316; examples of achievements already on record, 316
- Rural Life Association, 257, 258
- Russell, W. Duncan, general director of community service, Boston, 293
- School systems, increase in enrollment in fifteen years, 260; attitude of parent during depression, 261; year 1933-1934 worst in history of, 261; conditions somewhat improved, 261; millions kept in, longer than under normal conditions, 262; salary cuts of teachers, 262; suffering of plants through economy, 262; statistics as to housing of children, 262, 263; crowding of classrooms, 263; cutting of supplies and maintenance, 263; repairs and service charges cut, 263; youngest plants the first to suffer, 264; an average example, 265; Frank Wiggins Trade School, Los Angeles, 266; University of State of New York, service of, 271; New York's guidance, its apprentice training and schools for the handicapped, 271; public schools of Pennsylvania, vocational schools excellent, 272; special provision of, for boys and girls who are stranded, 272; some salutary reforms resulting from depression, 272; financing of, 272-274; saving of North Carolina, by overhauling system of taxation, 274; other states building a sound financial base for, 274; consolidation of districts, 275; trend toward change in teaching methods, 275, 276; opposition to innovations, 276; two years' study of public education in New York, 323; why this is necessary, 323; fear that boys will learn of Communism and Fascism in public schools, 325; an ever-widening gulf between schools and outside world, 326; vocational guidance of doubtful value, 326; need for expert guidance, 326; vocational schools in general inadequate, 327; the concern of most high schools, 327; schools frequently non-coöperative, 327; public schools not the democratic institutions they used to be, 328; needs of the public school today, 328-330
- Schultz, Dr. T. W., of Iowa State College, 210n.
- Scudder, Kenyon J., one of ablest school workers in the country, 340
- Seaton, Louis G., 176
- Seligman, E. R. A., tax expert, 273
- Service stations, Henry Ford's plant, 314, 315; only three other similar schools in the world, 315; charges against Henry Ford's plant, 316
- Settlement houses, a study of, 288
- Sharkey, Clare, head of Dayton co-operative high school, 266
- Shaw, George Bernard, 110
- Sheppard, Mrs. John S., on sane education in use of alcohol, 150
- Sheridan Hall, University of California, 118
- Sherrill, Col. C. O., survey of Ohio Department of Education and teachers' retirement system, 264
- Silcox, F. A., chief forester, 239
- Smith, Dorothy Wysor, 249
- Smith, T. V., 40
- Smith-Hughes Act, 1917, 258
- Social service, faults of the agencies, 331; rarely a help with delinquents, 331

- Social work, opportunities in, 216, 217
- Soil erosion work, 216
- Sokolski, June and Benny, on relief, 80, 81
- Soule, George H., Jr., 44
- State, the, how we regard our tax money, 291; how the money is spent, 291; playgrounds in Memphis, 291, 292; recreation systems, comment of W. Duncan Russell, 293; public museums and libraries, 294-295
- Stonehill, Tom Cary, story of, 14-16
- Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts, 294
- Tax money. *See* State
- Taxi and motor bus driving, 216
- Teaching. *See* Professions
- Technological unemployment, "white collar" field invaded by, 191, 192. *See also* Unemployment
- Tennessee Valley Authority, 36, 90, 106, 240, 241, 329
- Thomas, Norman, 42
- Thompson, Barney, 80
- Thurston, Ernest, Purdue graduate, in office of Indiana factory, 48, 49
- Tingley, Gov. Clyde, arraignment of young lawbreakers, 144
- Townsend, Dr. Charles, 51, 97
- Training school, devised not to punish but to save, 310; results of survey of, 310, 311; parole work of, often inadequate, 312
- Transients and transient service, as inadequate as CCC has been effective, 244; why the boys leave home, 245; how they travel, 245; these transients not like the old-time hoboes, 246; habits formed, 246; service supported by Federal funds, 247; increased numbers of vagabond citizens, 247; what the service attempted in its heyday, 250; this service in the New Deal's red column, 251
- Unemployment, 1930 figures on, 168; boys and girls 18-24 unemployed July 1, 1934, 168; situation in Niagara Falls, July-Sept., 1935, 169; clues revealed by study of, 170; question raised by Mr. Roosevelt's speech in fall of 1935, 171; a phase of, not caused by sickness, old age, or fault of workman, 171; "technological," 171; the price we pay for industrial progress, 171; decline in number of wage-earners, 172; concrete examples of effect of machine gathered by A. F. of L., 172, 173; upward trend in man hour output, 173; what happens to men who lose their jobs through technological improvements, 174, 175
- United States Rubber Co., 179, 200
- United States Steel Co., share-the-work plan of, 177; modernization of plants of, 180; a significant labor policy of, 180-182
- Upham, President A. H., increased enrollment of college students shown by survey of, 123
- Utah Copper Co., 218
- Vandaleur, Mr., on employment of messenger boys, 189, 198
- Veterinary. *See* Professions
- Vick Chemical Co., 197
- Virginia, University of, 10; radicalism at, 44
- Vocational Guidance for Juniors, New York, 196, 197
- Vocational Service for Juniors, New York, 348, 349; the case of Morgan, 349; the case of Eddy, 349, 350; their most notable work, 350
- Wagner, Minnie, director of Memphis playgrounds, 292
- Wagner-Peyser Act, 360
- Walker, Delos, on restoring full-time jobs to part-time employees, 189, 190
- Wallace, Secretary Henry A., 54, 98

- Warner, Dr. Marie P., lectures of, on problems of young people, 93
- Waxter, Judge William, Baltimore Juvenile Court, 305-307
- Waymack, W. W., 210n.
- Westermarck, Edward, a demonstration of, 79
- Weston, S. Burns, youth administrator for Ohio, quoted, 255, 256
- Whittier State School, California, 310
- Wiggins Trade School, Los Angeles. *See* Frank Wiggins Trade School.
- Williams, Aubrey, unemployment figures of, 168, 252-254
- Williams, Murat, Virginia undergraduate editor, 10; analysis of his classmates of, 10; on radicalism of the university, 44, 45
- Wilson, Woodrow, 5
- Wisconsin, College of Agriculture, on attitude of young people toward farming, 204
- Worden, R. C., comment on conversation of young nomads, 35
- Works, Dean G. A., students who come under observation of, 115; an illustration of sacrifice and hardship by a student, 115
- Wright, Chester, public relations counsel of United Textile Workers, 44
- Yost, Coach Fielding, crusade of, against drinking in Michigan stadium, 149
- Young, Arthur, in charge of industrial relations of U.S. Steel Co., 177; on company's modernization of plant, 180
- Young, Owen D., study of public education in New York headed by, 323; quotation from, 323
- Young Democrats, 42, 43; in Denver, 51; age limits of, 51, 52
- Young Men's Christian Association, 283; its aims, 283; what its National Council urges, 284; its special activities during depression years, 284; Thomas H. Nelson on fundamental problems of, 284
- Young Republicans, 43
- Young Socialists, 43
- Young Women's Christian Association, in Rochester, N.Y., 279; quests of, for facts concerning high-school graduates, 279, 280; its general policy, 280; result of questionnaire to its Leisure Time students, 281; special activities planned, 281; effort in Rochester not unique, 281; training courses in large industrial centers, 282; taken to those unable to come to the clubhouse, 282; Richmond an example, 282; on women backing it, 282; various aims of the organization, 283
- Youth, Inc., Ferndale, Mich., history of, 62-64
- Youth of today, their outlook, 3, 4; effect of depression years upon, 4; comparison of their qualities and conditions with those of the preceding generation, 25-27; their acceptance of their fate, 27, 28; lack of opportunity in the West for, 30; scant stimulus to individual enterprise, 31; psychological effect of great mechanized plants on, 31; absence of resentment of, 33; radicalism among, 38ff.; their increasing interest in public affairs, 50ff.; inventiveness of, 65; reasons for physical softness of, 65; their lack of home duties, 65, 66; natural product of a specialized era, 67; tragedy of their lack of faith, 68; church attendance of, 69, 70; Catholic and Jewish, 70; their lack of faith not confined to theology, 71; their attitude toward patriotism, 71; obstacles to belief that honesty, integrity and industry are essential to success, 74, 75; not without ethics, 75, 76; on the whole without discipline, 76, 77; views of, on morality, 79; realm in which they are making their greatest strides, 79; sense of

values a conspicuous quality of, 80; views concerning marriage, 80-82; code of those who refuse to be wholly cheated, 82; how they learn about contraception, 83, 84; where tragedy and crime are born, 84-86; their reasons for desiring marriage, 87, 88; their attitude toward divorce, 88; what the men desire in their wives, 88; broader tolerance of, for working wives, 88; young men in rural communities conventional, 89; young women more realistic than formerly, 89; statistics gathered from the conversation of five girls, 90, 91; how they arrived at an estimate of a sufficient income, 91; courses in marriage for, instituted in schools and colleges, 91, 92; clue to student reaction to this subject, 92; course in "prenuptial hygiene" at New York University, 92, 93; basic institution of our society not toppling, 94; lasting marriage the desire of this generation, 94; not hero-worshippers, 95, 96; opposition of, to war, 99-101; a dangerous attitude of, 101; ambitions of, 102; their attitude toward fame, 102; security their heart's desire, 102; haunted by fear, 105; how government service is looked upon, 106, 107; their preference for jobs in private industry, 106; differences between, and preceding generation, 108-110; those who are still untouched by the times, 110; attitudes of some sons of the rich, 111; attitude concerning self-expression, 111; freedom a dictionary word to them, 111; their concern with fundamentals, 112-113; their conviction concerning education, 114; job-hunters among, 125; in two great Chicago plants, 126; on ways of securing jobs, 126-127; ingenuity shown in trying to find work, 128; increase in applications for

work formerly in disfavor, 130; girls more versatile and more easily satisfied, 131; average wages received by graduates of great institutions, 131; those with any sort of work hopeful, 131; movies and radio essential to, 134, 135; screen stars taken as models by girls, 136; how they employ their leisure, 136ff.; their taste in music, 136, 137; lack of secondary interests of, 138; an average city block, 138, 139; magazines favored by, 139; troubles among young people, the upper classes, 141; a curious development of past five years, 141; Los Angeles "Ace of Spades" gang, 141; damage done by students, 141; why boys commit thefts, 141, 142; thieving by two girls, 142, 143; daydreams of, to throw off reality, 152; the Mary Richardson type of escape, 152; generation as a whole rather remarkable, 154; "Flaming Youth" a phase scarcely known to, 154; little snobbery among, 154; not afraid of work, 154; not particularly money-conscious, 154; conditions outside their parents' experience, 156; their psychological and economical situation most serious ever faced by a generation, 155; lack of understanding between parents and, 157, 158; attitudes of farm and city fathers toward, 159; unemployment not the only basis for misunderstanding, 159; white-collar legend still to battle, 159; educators' attempt to stem parental ambition seldom successful, 160-161; views of Louisville department store man on his children's drinking habits, 161, 162; financial aid of parents when children marry, 162-163; is there opportunity for? 164; a glance at opportunities and handicaps, 167ff.; will there ever be enough work to go around?

171; meaning of industrial progress and technological improvement to, 175; a few investigations, 176ff.; a chance for the superior youth in the labor policy of the U.S. Steel Co., 180-182; picture faced by those without special training or high intelligence, 182; a better chance everywhere for superior type, 185; the only exception, 185; a high-school certificate a help, 185; peculiar prejudices of some employers, 185; idle youth a liability, 187; many of this generation left by the wayside, 187; disappointment of those who went forth from schools in early part of decade, 188, 189; prospect faced from 1930 until quite recently, 189; better opportunities for college-trained girls, 194, 195; business again opening its doors to youth, 196, 197; reasons for choice of very young, 198, 199; attitude of rural youth to farm life, 203ff.; desire of, for better housing conditions, 208,

209; opportunities for reemployment in service and consumer industries, 211; in gardening, 211; in laundry work, 211. *See also* Agriculture (Department of), American Youth Commission, Coal mining, Davis (Anne), Domestic service, Drinking, Forestry, Professions, Rotary Clubs, School systems, Service stations, Soil erosion work, Taxi and motorbus driving, Youth Administration

Youth Administration, an examination of its program, 251, 252; defeat of purposes of, 252-254; scholarships allotted by, 254; an innovation of, 254; money allotted on quota basis, 255; some things under way, 255

Zaniewski, Eddy, Polish miner in a shack town, 21

Zimmerman, President James F., on public service as a career for youth of today, 107

Zu Tavern and Bullock, textbook on business principles, 270















